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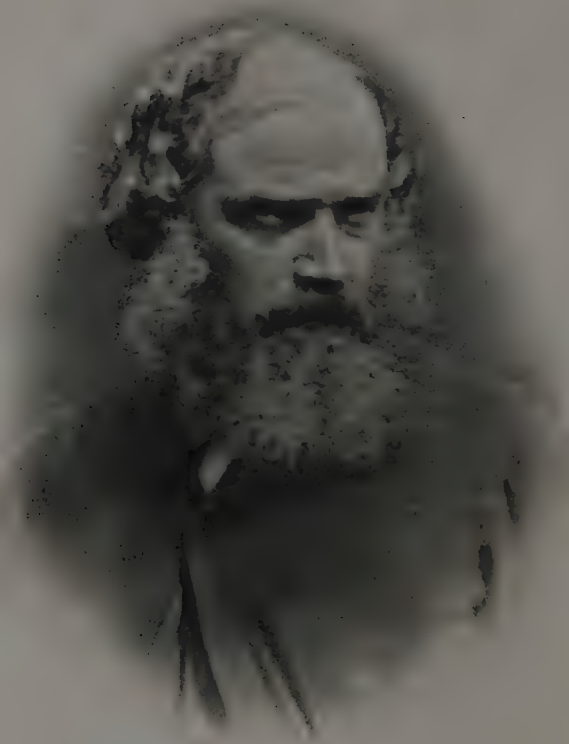
PHIZ AND DICKENS



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PHIZ AND DICKENS

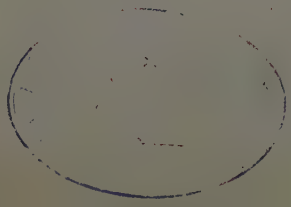
AS THEY APPEARED TO

EDGAR BROWNE

WITH ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY

HABLOT K. BROWNE

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY
1914



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TO

MY WIFE

PREFACE

DURING the last few years I have been repeatedly urged to put on paper my recollections of my father, Hablot Knight Browne, who is equally well known under his pseudonym of Phiz. It has even been urged upon me as a duty. No one except myself has seen any difficulty, though memory is a coy jade, and will not come for the asking. But it has been represented that, like Mrs. Dombey, all I needed was to make an effort. I have made an effort, and the following pages are the result. They are partly retrospective and partly critical, and even the critical are partly retrospective, as they embody opinions formed a long time ago, and modified, but scarcely changed, by a late review.

I have endeavoured to select from a chaos of youthful memories those facts and circumstances most important in serving to form the picture of the early Victorian society in which I opened my wondering eyes.

In the beginning I have taken my father as a central figure, and I have grouped around him such

people and incidents as seemed most interesting, and as a man cannot be separated from his times, I have endeavoured to describe the manners and customs and the mode of life of that section of the middle classes among whom I passed my early days.

I was desirous of veiling my own personality, but I found it impossible to justify my point of view without describing some of the circumstances which bore directly on myself.

I have given some account of the chief writers for whom he worked, including especially the greatest figure in Victorian literature, Dickens.

Of course for the early part of his career I have had to rely to a considerable extent on information derived from friends and family tradition. Later on in the book I have described him as I knew him from my own personal knowledge in middle life, and have given some account by the aid of the Dickens books (as those are the best known of all his works) of his development.

The illustrations to the present volume have been skilfully reproduced with a fidelity not formerly attainable, and are mostly from hitherto unpublished work. They are fairly representative of the artist's different styles and periods. Some are mere scraps done in odd moments, which by some fortunate chance escaped the waste-paper basket.

Several are merely tentative designs not intended to be seen by any eye but his own. For the most part they bear no reference to the text, but are interesting in revealing a personal character not discernible in more formal productions.

39 Rodney Street, Liverpool,
September 30th, 1913.

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PHIZ AND DICKENS

CHAPTER I

HABLOT KNIGHT BROWNE: HIS NAME AND CALLING

My father's uncommon Christian name was given him in memory of a French officer who was engaged to marry his eldest sister, my aunt Kate. But the marriage did not take place, as the young man was unfortunately killed either in the battle of Waterloo, or in some of the skirmishing that occurred before the combat. My father was born in July of the same year, and was therefore enveloped in a sentimental atmosphere. It was, of course, a surname. Journalists seem to have agreed to spell the word with a circumflex accent over the *o* thus—Hablôt. The precise significance of this addition has not yet been manifested. It is probably intended as a short and easy way of denoting the French origin of the word, and providing for the elision of the final *t* in speaking, so that the name is pronounced "Hablo." I cannot pretend

to be an authority on the French language, but I believe the accent usually denotes the suppression of the *s* or other letter in words derived from the Latin, as hostis = hôte, festa = fête, and so forth. But my father's name not being derived from the Latin, as far as I can see, we might just as well write Haricôt mutton or Bonmôt with an accent. The name seems to be a rare one even in France. Though I have cycled through innumerable small French towns and kept a good look-out, I have only once seen the name, and that was on a little brass plate on a *prie-dieu* in Auxerre Cathedral. Then it served as the name-plate of a certain Madame Hablot, indicating that she was both pious and prosperous. I have often lamented that I did not get her address from the verger, but I fancy there may have been no verger at hand, and anyhow I believe I should have been too retiring to have called, and incurred the suspicion of being a mendicant.

The name in English has the merit of being distinctive, though its varying pronunciation somewhat obscures its identity. In the family we aspirated the *H*, which the French do not, and suppressed the *t*. Tradesmen and others were in the habit of reversing this arrangement, and spoke of Mr. "Abblut Browne." I rather agree with the nursery-maid who said, "I *do* think

'Avvelo' is such a pretty name." So it is, besides harmonising euphoniously with the familiar "'Enery."

On leaving school, Browne showed such a strong bias towards the arts, and such a great disinclination to move in any other direction, that with the advice and aid of his brother-in-law, Mr. Elhanan Bicknell, he was placed as pupil or apprentice at Finden's. They were the leading engravers of the day, and executed a large number of plates of all sorts, either for framing, or as illustrations for books. These were the days of keepsakes, books of beauty, and annuals of various kinds. Line-engraving has never been equalled as a means of producing luminous little pictures for book illustrations, but the expense and tediousness of the process caused it to be disused as soon as a reasonably good substitute could be found. A great many hands were employed at Finden's, and several men were often engaged on one plate. Here Browne learnt the technical details of engraving. In after life he described himself as an engraver in all formal documents.

It is reported that he was not always solicitous for the finish of his plates, but was accustomed to etch little original sketches on the margin, which could be printed off and afterwards obliterated, and served more for amusement than edification. Simi-

lar little sketches are frequently made seriously by engravers, and are termed remarques.

The suggestion made shortly after his death that he was unacquainted with etching, and had to call in aid to complete the illustrations of *Pickwick*, had no foundation in fact. He was, indeed, ignorant of nearly all technical processes in the arts except those of etching and engraving, but that he was a more than competent etcher is shown by his winning in 1833, while a youth at Finden's, a medal from the Society of Arts for the best etching of a "Historical Subject." (It is quite impossible that a man who had been an apprentice at Finden's and a medallist at the Society of Arts should not have been able to etch his own plates.) The dimensions of this particular plate, representing John Gilpin at the turnpike, were about 20 inches by 13 inches. The design is full of rude vigour.

We first meet with Hablot Browne's name, in connection with any works of art, as one of several co-operating in the production of a book called *Winkle's Cathedrals*. The views generally aim at giving the picturesque aspect of architecture. The first of these drawings is dated 1835. The work seems to have been issued in parts, with two plates to each number, and Browne's last contribution appeared in January 1837, but may have been executed some little time before that. These draw-

JOHN GILPIN.

Etching for which the medal was awarded by the Society of Arts. Reduced from 19¼ *in.* × 12⅛ *in.*

ings afford definite indisputable proof that, as early as 1835, he was capable of preparing work suitable for engraving and publication in important books under his own name.

His drawings in this book are characterised by a lively chiaroscuro, and by the vivacity of the groups of figures, especially horsemen, which the other artists do not seem to have cared to tackle. The plates are mostly engraved by two of the Winkles, but other hands seem to have been employed as well.

There was at Finden's another apprentice, Robert Young, with whom Browne struck up a friendship which lasted all his life. The two determined to set up in business for themselves, and formed a sort of partnership, and started in a studio, in imitation of Finden's. For this purpose they took chambers in No. 3 Furnival's Inn, having as neighbour, though they knew it not, the man who was so greatly to influence their lives—Dickens was already living at No. 15. The entrance to the quadrangle was by a *porte cochère* from High Holborn. Dickens occupied chambers on the right as you entered the gateway, and Browne and Young had their rooms on the left. The far side of the quadrangle was taken up by Wood's Hotel, a respectable house where a kind of domestic comfort was provided for country visitors, including family prayers night and morning. The whole building has been knocked

down, and the site is occupied by the huge offices of the Prudential Insurance Company.

In the course of time Dickens removed to Doughty Street, in the neighbourhood of Euston Square, and a few years later Browne married and started housekeeping in Howland Street, in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, then an artistic centre. In the *Newcomes* Thackeray so describes it:—"One day on our way from the Temple through Howland Street to the Colonel's house, we beheld Major-General Thomas de Boots in full uniform rushing from Smee's door to his brougham. The coachman was absent, refreshing himself, the little boys cheered and hoorayed Sir Thomas, as arrayed in gold and scarlet he sat in his chariot. He blushed purple when he beheld us—no artist would have dared to imitate those purple tones. He was one of the numerous victims of Mr. Smee (a fashionable portrait painter). . . ."

The joint business of Browne and Young as engravers had actually made a start, and sundry plates were engraved as illustrations to books or having a separate existence, when Seymour's unfortunate death occurred. *Pickwick*, not at first a very flourishing publication, stood a chance of coming to an end. Seymour occupied a prominent position in the enterprise, and his death was a serious blow. The

attempt to replace him by Mr. Buss was a failure. Then it was that Browne was engaged as illustrator. His offer of comic drawings was accepted, but it was because he was a competent etcher that he came to the front. His ability as a designer had to be proved, though indeed it had been exhibited on the plate of John Gilpin, which was an original composition. Whether they actually took Browne on the faith of John Gilpin, or whether he offered himself, or whether they came to him, is not known, but such reputation as he had won was due to his work on *Winkle's Cathedrals*, in everything except the significant name far enough away from Mr. Pickwick and his friends.

It must be remembered that the employment of Phiz as the etcher of illustrations of Dickens and other writers brought a certain amount of jobbing work to the studio, because the plates for the larger issues were printed rapidly, in order to fulfil the demand, and therefore deteriorated to such an extent as to require repair. This work was of course done by assistants.

Some years ago, one pouring wet day, I took refuge in a little curiosity shop near Leicester Square. The proprietor, partly to pass the time, and partly to magnify himself a little, told me that he was a kind of literary character, having stitched the first

numbers of *Pickwick*, which he considered a failure, till the fourth number ; then the sales went up with such a bound that he had to employ hands to carry out his contract. " It was Sam Weller that did it," he said ; then after a pause, " and the illustrations."

A confirmatory opinion of how it struck contemporaries is afforded by a review in the *Quarterly*. The reviewer is evidently puzzled to account for the great popularity enjoyed by *Pickwick*, which, as we know from my friend in Leicester Square, was cumulative from the fourth number onwards. When the last number was published, it had become emphatically the book of the year. The reviewer remarks on the absence of plot and says, " It can hardly be as a story that the book before us has attained its popularity. . . . Our next proposition, that Mr. Dickens does not strikingly excel in his sketches of character or descriptions, is, we feel, open to dispute, and it is far from our intention to deny that he has considerable merit in both respects, but certainly not enough to found a reputation, or account for a tithe of his popularity. Incomparably one of the best sustained characters is that of Mr. Pickwick, whose every action seems influenced by the same untiring and enlightened spirit of philanthropy throughout."

The modern reader will scarcely agree with this estimate of Mr. Pickwick. He will probably consider Sam Weller and his father Tony as the real heroes. Mr. Pickwick and his friends only occupy secondary places—in themselves they are not very amusing, although their adventures certainly are.

The reviewer goes on to estimate the value of the illustrations. Speaking of Mr. Pickwick sliding on Wardle's pond, he first considers that scene (as a specimen of the writing), and then he says: "This scene, with all its bearings, is brought fully home to the mind's eye, without the aid of Phiz's illustrative sketch; but the success of many other passages is due in a great measure to the skill of that artist in embodying them. Indeed, only a faint notion could be formed of the outward man of the great Pickwick himself from the scattered hints afforded in the letterpress; namely, that he wore tights, gaiters, and spectacles. It is the pencil, not the pen, which completes the vivid conception we undoubtedly possess of his personal appearance; and how tame, without that, would be such situations as those in which he is detected holding Mrs. Bardell in his arms, or represented peeping through the bed curtains at the unknown lady at the inn."

The reader will remember that the portrait of Mr. Pickwick was drawn by Seymour.

Mr. J. G. Fennell, another friend, was clerk at Finden's, and had the business details at his finger ends. He seems to have occupied himself in acting as intermediary between promising young artists in want of cash and likely purchasers. In this manner he offered the plate of John Gilpin to Chapman and Hall, probably to put in their window for sale. Later on he appears to have got some commissions for Browne for small illustrations to pamphlets entitled " Sunday under Three Heads," and studies of young couples, and others which were in reality early efforts of Charles Dickens, under various pseudonyms, including Boz. So that Dickens and Browne really stood in relation to one another as author and illustrator from an early date, though neither of them had seen the other, nor indeed was aware of his real name. After Phiz became a busy man Mr. Fennell's occupation was gone, so far as Browne was concerned. In later years, when Browne was occupying himself with water-colour drawing, Fennell again came on the scene, and must have effected many sales. Browne himself was quite incapable of selling anything, but Fennell was full of enterprise and push, and as an Irish friend said to me, " He would make a living in a desert island, where you and I would starve."

The following correspondence indicates his re-

source and cleverness when he was desirous of gaining his point. He was a fisherman, and desired to have some fishing in water belonging to Lord D——, and wrote as follows: "Mr. J. G. Fennell presents his compliments to Lord D——, and requests permission for a day's fishing in such and such waters, &c." The reply was, "Lord D—— presents his compliments to Mr. J. G. Fennell, and begs to inform him that he only gives permission to fish to his relations and intimate friends." "Mr. J. G. Fennell presents his compliments to Lord D——, and learns with deep regret that his Lordship only gives permission to fish to his relations and intimate friends. Mr. J. G. Fennell begs to remind his Lordship that it is not his fault that he is neither the one nor the other."

His Lordship evidently had a sense of humour, for Fennell got his fishing.

Just about the time of the completion of *Pickwick*, in the winter of 1838, Browne went with Dickens on a special journey to Yorkshire to inspect some schools which had obtained an evil reputation, and to collect materials for the opening chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby*. They seem to have fastened on one particular man as the model for Squeers. I once asked my father what the original man was really like. He went so far as to say that the etching

was not unlike him. The particular features of the school as represented by both author and illustrator are probably largely imaginary, but the journey goes to show that some effort was made to establish a basis of fact. It is by no means certain that they got hold of the right man. Some of the material, including a wonderful letter from a father to a son who would not eat boiled mutton, was not derived from the man in question, but from a schoolmistress whom they met in the coach, who succumbed to the effects of liquor before she went to bed. John Browdie does not seem exactly like a Yorkshireman, but he is certainly quite unlike a Londoner, and may be counted as part of the spoils of the expedition.

Afterwards they made a journey together into the Midlands through Shakespere's country. They posted from Stratford to Shrewsbury through Birmingham and Wolverhampton, where they had their first glimpse of the black country, the beginning of that devastating industrialism which has since spread over many of the fairest spots in England. To this there is a reference in a letter from Dickens to his wife. " Starting at eight o'clock, through a cold wet fog, and travelling when the day had cleared up, through miles of cinder paths, and blazing furnaces, and roaring steam engines,

and such a mass of dirt and gloom and misery as I never before witnessed."

Then further he says, "We were at the play last night. It was a bespeak—'The Love Chase,' a ballet (with a Phenomenon), divers songs, and 'A Roland for an Oliver.' It is a good theatre, but the actors are very funny. Browne laughed with such indecent heartiness at one point of the entertainment, that an old gentleman in the next box suffered the most violent indignation. The bespeak party occupied two boxes, the ladies were full-dressed, and the gentlemen, to a man, in white gloves, with flowers in their buttonholes. It amused us mightily, and was really as like the Miss Snevellicci business as it could well be."

From here they went on to Manchester, where they had some letters of introduction to persons who could help them to see the sights, in the shape of the cotton mills and factories, but the important persons they saw were the two brothers Grant, who afterwards figured as the Cheeryble brothers in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

When I first came to Liverpool, an old lady told me she was intimately acquainted with the originals of the Cheeryble brothers, and described them as self-made men of great wealth and boundless generosity. She considered the descriptions very good.

CHAPTER II

HIS LIFE AND FRIENDS IN LONDON

DURING the time Browne remained in London he mixed in a circle of friends and acquaintances all occupied with the arts, and capable of stimulating his activities, encouraging him and criticising his works. He knew what was going on in the world of art among the younger men. He was appreciated and he was criticised ; he had, in short, that miscellaneous teaching that comes from emulation in a common pursuit.

We have a glimpse of him at a party at the house of John Lucas, a fashionable portrait painter, where he was evidently sociable. I owe this fact to an extract from a private letter by Miss Mitford. She writes :

" I passed one evening in town with dear Mr. Lucas. He is painting Prince Albert just now. He speaks very highly of him, and of his knowledge and love of art especially. He says that he could not speak with more taste of painting if he had studied under Raphael. At Mr. Lucas's I met Mr. Browne,

SKETCH OF A GIRL.

Water-colour early period.

the young artist who, under the name of 'Phiz,' has so much aided Dickens' reputation. He has just returned from Brussels, where he had been spending three weeks with Mr. Lever ('Harry Lorrequer'), and of him he speaks enthusiastically, as the pleasantest man in the world, his store of anecdote never flagging for a moment.

"I like Mr. Browne himself exceedingly.

"*January* 10, 1852."

The fame of John Lucas has not endured to the present day; his pictures have certainly not yet been boomed in the auction-room, nor is he mentioned in ordinary biographical dictionaries, but in his day he was somebody. In a review in an old number of the *Illustrated London News*, 1843, of the Royal Academy exhibition, he is mentioned as showing a portrait of Lady Mary Vyner and her son. The reviewer seems to have been a person of discernment, as he picks out Turner for special commendation, and advises Etty to study a particular picture of Rubens for his improvement. He says: "The great deficiency of modern portraiture is found in a want of that vivid individuality which living originals always present. The picture before us is a partial exception to the remark, but not in a degree to command great praise. It is thinly

but carefully painted, and the hands are drawn with more than usual accuracy"—from which we gather Mr. Lucas was probably not at his best that year.

In the same number, a half-page illustration of the public viewing the exhibition can be ascribed, on internal evidence, to John Leech, of whom mention is made hereafter.

I remember, when I was a very small and very inquisitive boy, being taken by my mother for an afternoon call at Lucas' house in St. John's Wood. I still retain the impression of the splendour of the house, and the magnificence of his garden enclosed by walls in the usual St. John's Wood fashion, and I have still a preference, probably from my early association, for this form of housing the middle classes. It is sad to think that all this magnificence has probably been swallowed up in workmen's flats.

Other friends there were probably not so high up on the ladder of fame, among whom we may count John Wood, an unfashionable portrait painter, who painted in backgrounds and drapery for his more fortunate friend and others. He was distinguished as being the first man whose pictures were burgled by being cut out of their frames. The robbers must have made a poor haul, and probably had mistaken the house.

Daniel Maclise, an excellent draughtsman, the leader of the romantic school, who described himself as hindered in his painting by seeing too much. His brother, Joseph Maclise, was almost, if not quite, as good a draughtsman, although he was a surgeon.

Then there was W. P. Frith, who advised Browne to paint scenes from real life, and was most successful when he followed his own receipt. It is rather the fashion to decry Mr. Frith, but he has left some works which in a faithful manner portray his own times. Curiously, though he always embodied a story in his pictures, he was singularly uninventive, and later on in life went so far as to offer £100 to anyone who would find him a subject. Popular pictures such as Ramsgate Sands, The Derby Day, The Railway Station, lasted him a long time, and brought in considerable sums.

Patrick Park, a sculptor, was also a friend, of whom I have not found any record. He especially admired my mother's hands, and cast and modelled them several times. I used to hear him spoken of a good deal at home.

Another of my father's acquaintances was Thackeray, who, like Buridan's donkey, hovered uncertainly between the arts and literature, until, by his fortunate rejection as an illustrator by Dickens and his

happy acceptance as a writer by *Punch*, it was decided for him in favour of literature. I believe his influence, with his knowledge, his sane outlook on life, and his appreciation of its pathetic and humorous sides, would have been most beneficial to my father. I have always thought Thackeray's illustrations underrated. They were often ill-drawn, unfinished, and the characters' clothes were generally floppy and flappy, but there was nearly always a clear presentation of the idea. The initial letters at beginning of chapters were among the very best that were ever executed. The *Christmas Books* illustrated by himself, or rather, I should say, written to his own illustrations, still delight us. His drawing was not sufficiently good to allow him to picture a pathetic situation, but except in that particular he is entitled to an honourable place among the humorous draughtsmen of his time.

Beyond these, Browne was brought into contact with many men in the making, at the Langham Sketching Club, which met about once a week, and may be in existence at the present day. Here the work was of the nature of exercises. All took part, and as subjects varied a good deal, each man's excellences and deficiencies were revealed. It was the only thing I ever heard him lament giving up. "I used to enjoy my evenings at the Langham,"

he said, and when he came back to London I urged him to rejoin, but it was too late.

Besides this he did some intermittent work at a private school for art, perhaps the original of Gandish's, and certainly bearing a close resemblance to it, so amusingly described by Thackeray in *The Newcomes*. These private schools (with the exception of Heatherley's in Newman Street) were mostly killed by the extension of the Government system, but they served a purpose as affording a place of practice for those who either could not or did not want to join the Academy. Here Browne must have made many acquaintances, but he was especially attracted by Etty, whose work interested him considerably.

Browne evidently knew Leech from his earliest days. He told me he had been to his studio in the beginning, and it contained a very large easel, and scarcely anything else, evidently in preparation for some great work which was never even begun. Indeed Leech seems to have lost all desire or aptitude for painting early in his career.

One day when walking with my father down Regent Street we met Leech. While we were chatting a man came up and very politely said, "Have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Leech?" "You have." He took him on one side for a

minute or so. Leech on rejoining us told us the man was quite unknown to him, but that he had given him a joke for *Punch*. He said people frequently did offer him subjects in this manner. Most of his work was executed on wood, and appeared in the pages of *Punch*. I was astonished when looking through his scrap-books, where he seems to have preserved any designs he had ever made, to notice how tentative and hesitating they were, the figures being mapped out by little short strokes more like the work of an amateur than a professional. One of my father's designs for the *Knight of Gwynne*, which was amongst them, was remarkable by its contrast of precision and directness. But when Leech came actually to draw on the wood all indecision vanished, and he drew with firm, strong, impressive lines. He was essentially a comic draughtsman, that is to say, the drawings themselves were funny and mirth-provoking without any aid from the legend or literary explanation beneath. He excelled in the delineation of respectable middle-aged gentlemen in farcical predicaments. There is a whole series extending over a great length of time recording the experiences of Mr. Briggs, who, in his own way, was as funny as Mr. Pickwick. Besides woodcuts, he executed a number of etchings illustrative of Surtees' sport-

ing novels, comic histories of Rome and England, and Dickens' *Christmas Books*. The etchings were very slight in character, but were given solidity by being coloured. This was a primitive process. Leech of course set the pattern, the copyist would spread out a number of prints all round a large table, having a number of saucers ready prepared with the appropriate tints, blue for skies, red for hunting coats, brown for earth, and then would start off and tint all the skies, then all the coats, and so on, till every object was separately coloured, and the work was done. The effect was certainly gay, but generally too crude to be pleasant. The excellent etchings to the *Chimes* are considerably injured by the crudeness of their colouring.

Somewhere about 1860 a process was invented and taken up by Bradbury by which drawings could be enlarged or diminished. The design was drawn or printed on a block of indiarubber, which by a specially contrived apparatus could be drawn out and expanded, or allowed to contract and diminished. A number of Leech's drawings from *Punch* were so treated, and greatly enlarged, and then coloured by Leech himself, and were shown in an exhibition at the Egyptian Hall. They were afterwards reproduced by some process of colour printing and sold to the public, and specimens may often be seen

framed as decorations to halls and billiard-rooms in country houses. The drawings themselves suffered by their increase in size. Leech was a very amiable man, but in the latter part of his life he became irritable, over-sensitive to noises, and was positively vindictive towards barrel-organ grinders. His death was currently reported to have been due to mental overstrain, but bearing in mind that a man in easy circumstances can recover from that condition by a few months' rest, it seems more probable that he died from some definite disease, of which nervous irritability was merely a symptom. " God knows," said Mr. Evans to my father, " 'tis not from any overwork we gave him ; he did what he liked, and it has been for years considerably less than was originally arranged." His death created a blank which has never been filled.

George Cruikshank was twenty years older than Dickens, but may be counted amongst the early Victorians, as he illustrated the collected *Sketches by Boz*, about 1833, and later on *Oliver Twist*. He was incomparably the finest etcher of his time, and his work is known all over the civilised globe. Although he was a caricaturist as regards his figures, he was a realist in regard to all the objects composing his picture. He excelled in the representation of squalor and misery ; a slum, a workhouse ward,

a scullery or a prison ; he drew household implements, tools, the mean furniture of mean houses with the fidelity of a Dutchman. He had no sense of beauty either in architecture, landscape, or the female figure. Sir Frederick Wedmore goes so far as to say, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, " He drew horses badly, dogs indifferently, women atrociously."

I have seen him frequently. His face appeared to me extremely individual and of an exceptional type. I used to think he had a Jewish look, but I doubt if it was more than a casual resemblance to the Semitic type. He was reported to have an enormous family, but his gifts do not seem to have been inherited ; at all events, none of his children have become known in the arts. In his latter years he became a violent teetotaler, and published his powerful set of drawings called " The Bottle," illustrating the downfall of a family who began a career of drunkenness by unfortunately taking a glass of spirits to aid the digestion of a roast goose !

In the illustration to chapter xlvi. of *Dombey*, representing Mr. Carker riding home, among a number of placards to be seen on the wall which forms the background, the most conspicuous is that of Cruikshank's Bottle, a delicate compliment from Browne to his distinguished contemporary. He lived to

a great age, retained his physical vigour, and was proud of being able to dance a hornpipe at the age of eighty. He was fully persuaded, and persuaded some others, that he was the author of *Oliver Twist*. The same form of hallucination, in a more altruistic form, haunts some people with regard to the authorship of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It seems a pity that a lapse of about three hundred years prevented Cruikshank from illustrating Bacon.

I never saw Doyle. His work was greatly esteemed in our house, and the lamp of his charming fancy helped to banish the gloom in which the early Victorians were supposed to live. He so far resembled Browne that he depended on his imagination for his designs, and never used a model. He was not so excellent in dealing with real life as he was with fairies, grotesques, and other personages not inhabitants of this base world. He had a comradeship with elves and fairies, but he successfully illustrated *The Newcomes*, and his etchings executed for that book have certainly a very considerable grace and character. Still more original are the small woodcuts and initial letters interpolated in the text. One of his works continues to have the most enduring fame, and is viewed once a week by all English-speaking persons without satiety, although they have seen it fifty times a year for seventy years.

The front cover of *Punch* in decorative effect and lively fancy and aptness of character has never been equalled, and we should just as soon think of changing it as we should think of altering the royal arms.

He left the staff of *Punch* at the time of the Papal aggression. His most popular work was the *Tour of Brown, Jones and Robinson on the Continent*. He also drew a few illustrations for Dickens' *Christmas Books*.

Doyle's father was a political caricaturist who enjoyed a considerable reputation in his time. His portraits, half fact and half fancy, resembled those which have since appeared in *Vanity Fair*, except that they were lithographs executed in black and white instead of colours. He signed them for some unknown reason H. B., and in later days the works were not unnaturally attributed to Phiz. In fact some people have so strongly held this view, that in spite of my denials they have insisted that he was not only the author of these works, but of my being. Truly it is a wise son who knows his own father, but I may be permitted to know who was not, and on this head I am confident.

CHAPTER III

HOME LIFE IN CROYDON

We moved to Croydon on account of my mother's health. The move answered its purposes; my mother recovered her natural activity, and from being a person who required waiting upon, became one who looked after everybody else.

Croydon was then a country town about ten miles from London on the Brighton road, passing through Brixton and Streatham. We often drove into town, putting the pony and trap at livery at a stable on the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge during the time we were occupied with our business. Or, if we pleased, we could go by railway to London Bridge by a train, not drawn by a locomotive, but propelled by an atmospheric tube, a mechanism which soon became obsolete. Things were so primitive that a porter used to come out from the station yard into the road and ring a big dinner-bell five minutes before the train started. We lived about three-quarters of a mile from the station on the London road, in a sort of outskirt of Croydon, called Thornton Heath. The house was small and

straggling, and had been contrived by knocking two still smaller into one. Consequently one side was a very funny duplicate of the other—two little entrances, two little staircases, two little front rooms, were visible from whichever door you entered, so that strangers were often brought to great confusion by the superfluity of landmarks, and turned in wrong directions to recover their hats and coats, although the place was so small. The ground floors, however, towards the back, were not exactly symmetrical. On the southern side was the kitchen and its offices, with a little back stair leading to the servants' bedrooms, but on the northern side the kitchen had been absorbed and thrown into another room to make a really good dining-room, and at the back of the house, on the first floor, and approached by a separate staircase, making the fourth, was the Governor's studio, a room held sacred, and supposed to be full of invisible dangers for intruders, like Bluebeard's chamber. By joining the original two gardens together a very good one had been formed, growing plenty of fruit on trees and bushes, besides a profusion of old-fashioned flowers. We were especially proud of an acacia tree, partly because it was supposed to be a rarity, and partly because it served as shelter for out-of-door tea in fine weather ; but the crowning glory was a morella

cherry-tree, which bore exactly the proper fruit for conversion into cherry-brandy. At the end was the field which served for pasturing the animals. There was also a pond which we used for launching Robinson Crusoe's raft. This magnificent structure took weeks to build, and invariably overset on its first voyage, submerging its crew. No matter how often the attempt was made, the result seemed always the same.

We were separated from our neighbours partly by a row of trees and partly by stables, which would appear to modern eyes considerably too large for the house. We lived a good deal in the trees and the sloping roof between our own and our neighbours' stables. We mostly lived free from the embarrassing presence of grown-ups, as pirates or Saracens, or other terrible kinds of men, and we were wont to summon three girls who lived next door, and who were treated as female slaves.

Years afterwards, one day when I was sitting in the sun on the shore at Hastings recovering from an illness, I noticed a nice-looking lady approaching me with her eyes fixed intently on my face. When she came close to me a gleam of recollection passed over her face, and she said, " I am sure you are Edgar Browne." I replied, " I also am sure on that point." She then told me she was one

of the girls who lived next door at Croydon, and had been for some time happily married and the mother of children. She was so feminine, sympathetic, and gentle, that I felt hideously ashamed that I had formerly driven her round the garden with a whip. I have always lamented since that I had not sufficient presence of mind to ask her address before she rejoined her friends.

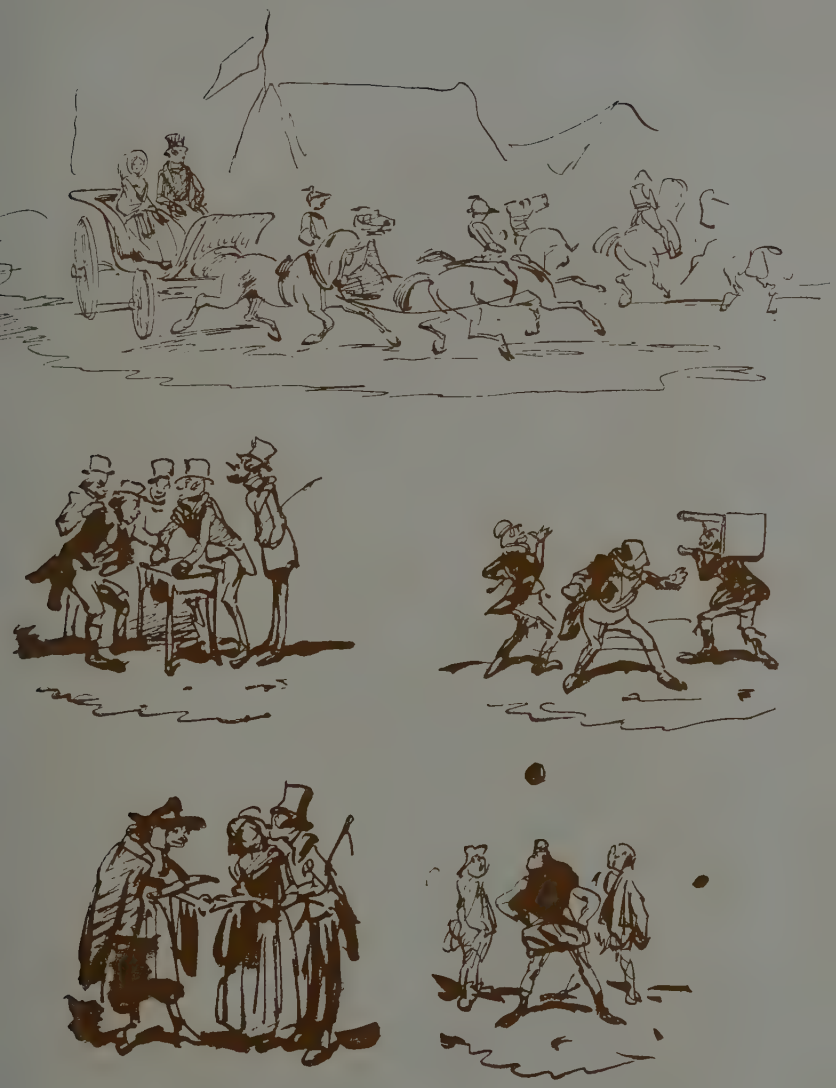
The Governor laid claim to the whole of the lower parts of the stables, and kept there a strong saddle-horse, which could be used as hack or hunter, a big pony (or cob) which could be driven in the chaise or do an easy day's hunting. There was also at times a donkey with two panniers, a goat and a carriage which was used for a small person to practise driving. When there was not a small person of the appropriate size the goat or donkey would be temporarily abolished, but the two horses constituted a permanent stud; and there were also two Scotch terriers.

This rambling place was exactly suited to Browne's wants and his temperament. He was extremely industrious, and disappeared into his studio soon after breakfast, and sometimes could only with the greatest difficulty be brought down to meals. In the winter he hunted with some regularity, and the rest of the year rode about a good deal in the

country in the afternoons. He often took one of us boys with him and gave us practical hints in horsemanship. These were sometimes a little rough. I have a vivid remembrance of the cob putting his foot in a rabbit hole on Smithum's bottom, and flinging me outspread like a frog on the hard chalky surface of the downs, not at all mitigated by what appears to be a covering of grass. I recall the sound of the fall, and the universal shake up of every atom of my body, and hearing the Governor's voice, apparently from an enormous distance, asking if I were dead. I rather wished I had been.

Our home resembled some couple of hundred or so that stretched along the line of the Brighton road. Of what happened in the homes of the very rich I can scarcely speak, but the professional classes have never been more comfortable than they were in the early Victorian years. Parsons, doctors, lawyers, authors, artists, and returned Anglo-Indians lived comfortably on moderate but sufficient incomes. Competition was not severe, and industry in any profession would secure a livelihood—openings were not difficult to find.

Home life was remarkably simple and comparatively cheap, as very little was sacrificed to display, and next to nothing on luxury. Food was plain and very solid, and, I may add, genuine. The roast



FIVE SKETCHES ILLUSTRATING THE HUMOURS OF A RACECOURSE.

Pen and Ink, on Letter Paper

Early drawings showing habit of jotting down ideas as they occurred.

beef of Old England was not from America, and was not baked. Entrées were called "made dishes," and in some houses tabooed as "kickshaws," a species of food only fit for foreigners. Fruit was seldom imported from a greater distance than the next county, except in the case of oranges, figs, raisins, and the like, and therefore the limits of the seasons were rigidly defined and maintained. There was a firm belief in the virtues of port as a tonic. Formal dinner parties were rare, but there was a great deal of dining together in a casual way. The dinner-hour varied surprisingly, according to the season and our occupations; sometimes you might suppose it to be lunch, and another time suppose it to be supper, and nobody, not even the cook, seemed to mind. As there were no telephones, a good supply of eatables was kept in the larder for emergencies, as people had a habit of "dropping in to dinner," as the phrase ran, and our nearest tradesman being half a mile off, someone on occasions had to go off hurriedly on the pony to get an extra chop.

This kind of irregularity was not peculiar to us, on account of the artistic temperament of the head of the household. It was more or less common at this period. The railway has been the real promoter of regularity and punctuality in daily life. The

train presses more inexorably on the doings of a household than time or tide, which were the stimuli relied on by our forefathers for egging on laggards.

There was a much greater friendliness between mistress and servant than in the present day, though the class distinctions were much more strongly marked. No servant ever thought she was a lady; nor did a mistress, though she might make a friend of a servant, consider her on the same level as herself. The footing of mistress and servant is very well described in the account of Mrs. Copperfield and Clara Peggotty. In the morning servants appeared in short sleeves, showing a considerable proportion of red arm, in the afternoon they changed into long-sleeved gowns. There was great restriction in the amount of liberty allowed for going out, and kitchen visitors, called "followers," were regarded with suspicion, and sometimes entirely prohibited.

Croydon was situated in a most beautiful country. London bricks and mortar extended no nearer to us than Brixton, which was then a compact and grubby suburb. Intervening there were commons —Streatham, Tooting, Balham—and only scattered houses. East, west, and south was entirely country—hills, heaths, commons, scattered villages and small

towns, extending into Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire.

As boys we were given great liberty in wandering over this delightful land, and at a very early age were allowed to take out the pony-chaise, and drive ourselves whithersoever we liked. No anxiety seems to have been felt about our absence, as our splendid appetites were excellent timekeepers, and could be relied on to bring us home within a reasonable time. We all of us acquired a passionate liking for natural scenery, and a great taste for investigating churches, farmyards, and other people's premises. How we were tolerated I cannot imagine, but we seem to have been considered quite nice little boys—the London hooligan was scarcely known—and therefore boys in general had not a bad reputation. Our mother, of course, was greatly occupied with household affairs and the upbringing of the last new baby, who might almost be described as a hardy annual. Large families were the rule, and were considered a blessing, and not even an inconvenience.

My father himself was a member of a family that would be considered large at the present day, being one of fourteen—ten boys and four girls. He was the youngest but one, and came between Octavius and Decimus, and it was a safe rise to

pretend that his real name was Nonus. There was a Septimus, Octavius, and Decimus. I have in my possession a statement of his private baptism, probably on account of a suspicion that he was not going to live. In that document his names are given as Hablot Knight Nonus Browne. The Nonus is erased and underlined, and in an official certificate of his formal baptism in the Church of St. Mary, Lambeth, 21st December 1815, the name is given as Hablot Knight—no Nonus. The officiating clergyman was the same on both occasions, the Rev. Henry White, so that we can safely conclude that there was an intention of numbering him, which was immediately relinquished.

Some friends of ours who lived at the other end of the town had eighteen children. We frequently spent the afternoon with them, to prevent them feeling lonely. As a gracious acknowledgment, deputations made return visits to us; but I do not think the whole eighteen ever came at one time, but certainly they appeared in sufficient numbers to produce a shortage of chairs.

Occasionally the two families made expeditions, accompanied by an extraordinary number of acquaintances and female slaves, carrying bows and arrows, and provisions to an amount suitable apparently for a long voyage, but actually only capable

of lasting a few hours. The ammunition was intended for the slaughter of squirrels or any small birds that might be about. I have considerable satisfaction in saying not a single death resulted in spite of all our preparations—we might as well have carried some salt to put on their tails. But the best of all our expeditions was when a farmer would invite us to assist in the taking down of a haystack and killing the rats. Then with leathern gaiters, or with string wound round our trousers, sticks in our hands, and our dogs in attendance, we indulged in a slaughter which would have satisfied savages. The female slaves did not desire to join this expedition.

By degrees we were more and more brought under the influence of the ordinary educational people, beginning with the usual governess, and ending with the clergyman, who took a few young gentlemen before they were sent off to boarding-school. Though we passed through several hands they all taught the same subjects, in very much the same method, as if there was a well-known receipt for teaching little boys the rudiments of learning. Latin was the principal subject, beginning with delectus and passing on to the Gallic War, and including the syntax of the Eton Latin grammar committed to memory. We had a

little arithmetic, very unintelligently taught, and as much geometry as is contained in the first book of Euclid; history consisting of the kings of England, with their dates and the names of their wives; and geography, including the names of places, but not a single geographical idea; and we learned to recite certain stock pieces of English poetry, such as "Hohenlinden" and the "Burial of Sir John Moore." We also committed portions of the Scriptures to memory, certain Psalms, either the Epistle or the Gospel for the Sunday, not forgetting the Collect for the day. This exercise I consider to have been most valuable in giving us some knowledge of the English language, an advantage which lasts throughout life. No sort of utilitarian or practical lesson can for a moment be compared with it. The child is more carefully studied in the present day, but it is doubtful whether his education has correspondingly improved.

From these people we learnt something, but not so much as we did from the liberty to use a very good little library, which suited our tastes, as it was largely composed of illustrated editions.

Means of illumination were poor, and in the long winter evenings during blind-man's holiday we were accustomed to sit round the fire, developing the family circle from a figment to a fact. Before dinner

a difficult process of illumination began, generally by the appearance of a single candle, brought in by the maid, to serve as a focus. This was followed by heroic efforts to light the lamp, which had to be wound up like a clock. There was no mineral oil, so some variety of animal or vegetable origin had to be employed, and being of difficult inflammability, it often spluttered and smoked, and gave forth very little light.

At one time we had a machine, shaped like the Duke of York's column, which carried a three-wick candle, big enough for a Roman Catholic Cathedral, and thrust upwards by a spiral spring. Occasionally, as the wax became heated, the catch would become loose, and the candle would be jerked upwards to the ceiling. Matches were called lucifers, and required a good deal of smart rubbing to make them catch fire. They were tipped with sulphur, which had a private little stage of ignition all to itself, giving rise to a good deal of bubbling and a foul-smelling vapour. As the slightest damp rendered them untrustworthy, prudent housekeepers, like so many Vestals, maintained a number of constant flames during the night for use in case of illness. Our bedrooms were each provided with a rushlight placed in a shade, which was stationed in a basin on the floor, where it glistened away like

a gigantic lighthouse in a particularly small piece of water.[1] The holes in the shade were represented on the walls by large discs of light, which had an uncanny movement in the slightest draught, and caused me (and other children) a vague terror only one degree less terrible than the darkness. Child's night lights were a great improvement, but were easily put out in the efforts to light a candle from their tiny flames, and were therefore disliked by housemaids.

My father sat with us when etchings were in progress, as the glare from the plate was unpleasant in artificial light, but if he was designing or working on wood, he might come down later. The conversations were by no means banal. My father was full of information and a good talker, and his simplicity of character made him put himself instinctively on our level. We discussed books and pictures, historical events from Alfred the Great to the flight of Louis Philippe. Nelson and Napoleon, and the almighty Duke of Wellington, were viewed under strange and unfamiliar lights. Our science had the merits of originality, and owed nothing to previous investigators. We had an extensive and peculiar knowledge of savages, which could be crystallised into a dramatic form from such

[1] *Pickwick.*

excellent books as *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Omoo*, *Typee*, and Bruce's *Travels*. We were also greatly interested in the lives of great painters, which the Governor read to us with much spirit from a popular book. This concerned itself with the old masters, and was more to be depended on for anecdotes of their lives than criticisms of their works. He also read us extracts from Froissart's *Chronicles* (translation), and entertained us greatly by showing us the armour and dresses of the Middle Ages from coloured books of costume, which we honestly believed were the finest books in the world, and too valuable to be handled unless under supervision. In the same way we made acquaintance with the *Arabian Nights*, and insensibly gained a knowledge of the glitter and splendour of Oriental life. Thus at an early age we learned to look critically upon pictures and illustrations, and not merely regard them as representations of scenes. We learnt to separate the wheat from the tares according to our lights. The Governor would explain his own preferences, which we could follow or not as we pleased. His thoughts were entirely original. He had no idea of adopting anybody's opinion second-hand, but did not suppose that his own was of the slightest value or interest to anybody else. In this he differed from the majority of people, who seem to suppose

that their opinion matters a great deal and other people's nothing at all; whereas the prosperity of a criticism like a jest's lies in the ear, and the listener's mental capacity is as important as the speaker's. No opinion is worth uttering if it fall on an unreceptive mind. The only criticism of value is one appreciable by the listener.

For instance, one night a foreigner was seated next to my Aunt Kate at dinner, and he happened to mention the works of Van Eyck. My aunt, who was a precise lady, said, "I suppose you mean Van Dyck." "No, no," he said, "I mean Van Eyck." "Was *he* a great painter?" "Of the greatest—he paint every 'air on the legs"—a just remark, but hardly a convincing argument for a maiden lady.

From an early age we were accustomed to go to picture galleries. I cannot remember the time when we did not go to the National Collection, then housed partly in Trafalgar Square and partly in Marlborough House. We were given shillings to go to the Water Colours, with strict injunctions to look out for the works of David Cox.

Needless to say, Browne made very few acquaintances amongst the neighbours; any remnant of sociability he had left in him was effectively dissipated by the evident wish to treat him as a lion.

The neighbourhood thought it too good a chance to be lost. Ladies would occasionally stop us on the road, and ask us whether the Governor did not use us for models, and other questions of an embarrassing nature. These symptoms of a popular interest were more than sufficient to drive him to take refuge in the shell of his own house, his innate dislike to publicity was strengthened, and his natural shyness increased.

However, he made one firm and valued friend in the person of Dr. Westall, who was summoned as a doctor and remained as a friend. He was a tall, good-looking man, with a healthy pink complexion, white hair, and a cheerful expression. He always dressed in black, with a white choker wound two or three times round his neck, and was invariably spick and span even if he had been up all night. He had a large practice, including several local celebrities, but he was very glad to have the opportunity of adding the Hablot Browne family to his list. As he was a doctor, he could penetrate to any room in the house without giving offence, and he was not long in making his way into the studio. How could he be repulsed when he brought tidings of wife and child? Being accustomed to put people at their ease, he soon overcame the Governor's reserve, and made frequent visits, and found a

welcome. He took a great interest in the work, and especially admired the water-colour sketches, of which in course of time he acquired several. He was very much interested and not a little shocked at my father's carelessness in business affairs, and if a chronic condition could have been remedied by a few doses of good advice, it is probable that our income would have been considerably increased.

My father enjoyed his society very much. His was the only house I remember which we would visit without a special or repeated invitation. We made the acquaintance of the family through the only son, who was our senior, and greatly respected as an authority on school games. Through him we came to know the four daughters, to whom we became greatly attached.

It is the fashion in our times to suppose that the early Victorian girl was kept under lock and key, but my experience leads me to think that in the country there was fully as much liberty as there is now. We walked or rambled about when and where we pleased, with no weightier obligation on us than bringing the girls back in time for meals. It was a free and happy existence.

Unfortunately the Westall boy was attacked by rheumatic fever, and died of heart disease, to the great grief of the two families. As they had no

sufficient memorial of him, Westall begged my father to do a portrait. In order to accomplish this, I remember, he shut himself up for some days, and refused to see any of his family, lest he should have wrong impressions on his mind, and painted a life-size portrait, which had considerable merit, and was considered an excellent likeness by the poor lad's friends, and supposed to have no drawback beyond a certain sadness of expression.

Dr. Westall was always anxious my father should have some permanent regular source of income, and at one time used his influence to obtain for him the post of drawing-master in the East India Company's military college at Addiscombe. The Governor consented to stand, and I cannot sometimes help smiling at the idea of the delineator of Micawber instructing future generals in the drawing of fortresses or the contour of hills. I believe Mr. Callow was the successful candidate, and the better man for the post.

One result of my father's move to Croydon was to separate him from his artistic friends, and to deprive him of the valuable influences by which he was surrounded. He was definitely out of town and in the country; he could only be visited by dint of special effort. He might have gone, and perhaps may occasionally have gone, and visited

some of his old acquaintances on his own account, but ten miles to the early Victorians seemed an almost unbridgeable chasm, and indeed would be now as far as regards keeping up acquaintance.

Means of communication were poor and inadequate, but nearly every Sunday, and sometimes on week-days, my father's partner, Robert Young, paid us a visit. He was a good-looking man of medium height, broad chested, and would have been powerful but for a wasted leg, so that he had to walk, and could only walk, by the aid of a stick. He was at this time at Furnival's Inn, carrying out two lines of business for the benefit of the partners, one the biting in and repairing of Browne's etchings, the other the production of line engravings suitable for book illustrations or for framing. For these latter Browne often provided original drawings, but were sometimes taken from existing pictures. The establishment at Furnival's Inn was of the same nature as Finden's, but on a smaller scale. In the family Young was known as Uncle Bob, and even now I have difficulty in remembering his proper name, and that he was not a relation. He did not concern himself much with the arts generally, but only as connected with the business and the process of engraving. He was a cheerful, well-read man, and had the most sincere attachment to my father,

LABOUR IN VAIN.

Line engraving by Robert Young from an oil-painting by Hablot K. Browne published for joint benefit. Reduced from 10¼ *in.* × 8¼ *in.*

and a profound admiration for his intellect and skill. He died only a few years ago.

He introduced us to many books which afterwards became famous. Occasionally he brought down small parties of men, who often stopped to dinner. But the persons whom we saw were not painters, but literary men, authors and publishers, and they mostly came to talk over their illustrations and to hurry things up. They exercised a deleterious influence over my father's artistic development, for they absorbed his attention and dissipated his energy.

Of those who visited I can remember best among many others Mark Lemon, who must in the first instance have asked as a matter of politeness to see the family, for we all came down to the little drawing-room on show. He made himself most agreeable to us children, contrasting in this respect with some of the other authors. He was immensely stout, and being very witty, was forthwith dubbed Sir John Falstaff. So far from being offended, he was delighted with what must have been to him a familiar jest, but it fell upon a prepared mind, and some time afterwards he started an entertainment and enacted the part of Falstaff himself. Except that he was the great editor of *Punch*, his literary fame is hardly remembered.

In more senses than one he entirely overshadowed Dickens, who apparently was not much interested in us personally, and whom we only saw in uncertain glimpses by no means free from an uncomfortable sense of awe. He appeared to us overwhelming, very splendid as to his clothing, and rather unapproachable. Reflection in after years has convinced me that our impression was erroneous. What we saw and felt was the contrast between ourselves and a being of superhuman energy and vigour of expression. Added to that, it is quite certain that he came about business, and on most occasions we were bundled out of the way. Of course the names of the leading writers were more familiar in our mouths than household words, and we took them for granted, as we did the Queen and Prince Albert.

It might be supposed that the members of Browne's family might have played some part in his development. There were several living within easy distance. His brother Octavius lived at Brixton, and as they both had pony-chaises, there was a good deal of intercourse between the two families. Octavius went out to Melbourne as agent for a business firm, and happening to arrive at the beginning of the gold fever, he made a large fortune, and retired to Devonshire. But he had no sympathy with the arts.

We used occasionally to drive over to see Great-Uncle Moxon, who had a nice place at Twickenham, and whom we regarded as a very wonderful old gentleman ; what his real claims to admiration were I really do not know, but he was a great centre in the family. Our youthful admiration rested on the facts that he had an apple-room, a deep fish-pond, two turnspit dogs, and a dinner-bell that rang in the grounds. A delightful custom existed at his house. Before dinner a large block of cannel coal was put on the drawing-room fire to be warmed through, and when we left the table was broken up with a poker, and gave rise to a most cheerful blaze, which excited the admiration of all beholders.

His son John, my father's cousin, was boundlessly kind to me. He lived at Regent's Park, and for some years I passed the Christmas holidays at his house, in companionship with his children, two sons and two daughters. This, besides softening my manners and not allowing them to grow brutal, carried with it a permanent free admission to the Zoological Gardens and to the Polytechnic, an institution for the purpose of popularising science.

The entertainment here varied from the subaqueous wonders of a diving-bell and the electric eel, to the marvels of dissolving views, and lectures illustrated with dazzling experiments by Professor

Pepper, a gentleman who afterwards became celebrated as being the only man who had a ghost who walked in his lifetime.

It was here, at Hanover Terrace, that I saw the only Dickens character that I ever beheld quite complete with my own eyes. She was a dwarf, and the etching was remarkably like her, though I do not think my father ever saw her. In the book she was Miss Mowcher, in real life she was a married lady, and a professional chiropodist and manicurist. She was driven on her professional rounds in a very narrow little brougham of a kind known as a pill-box, because it was patronised by doctors. I am sorry to say I contributed to a slight accident which she suffered when she was visiting professionally at Regent's Park. I had been concerned with one or two friends in an assault and repulse on the stairs with peashooters ; as the little creature came down the stairs, she slipped on some of the peas, and sat down very suddenly and alarmingly. We restored her with a glass of sherry, and she sat on the lowest stair rocking her body to and fro, saying as a sort of refrain between the sips, " You see the body is so long, and the legs so short, and stairs are difficult," all quite in the genuine Dickens manner.

Miss Mowcher dwelt within a stone's-throw of No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, where Dickens lived

for some years, and he must have known her well by sight. Generally his characters owe a good deal to the imagination, and are compounded of more than one model, but in this case the sketch, as far as externals go, was a veritable portrait.

When we drove over to visit Great-Uncle Moxon, it was often to pay our respects to my grandmother, who frequently stayed there. She used also to come out and stay at West Barns Park, a farm near Merton, which was within an easy drive of us, where we also visited. We considered it an earthly paradise, and in addition to sundry barns and haystacks to play amongst, there was a pond sufficiently large to carry a real rowing-boat.

I was once so happy as to be weather-bound in the farm by a flood, and passed some three or four days tinged with romance. My elders, I need hardly say, were not only very uncomfortable, but suffered from the destruction of their property.

The farm belonged to Mrs. Rayne and her sons, who I fancy often experienced the bad times which were frequent with farmers. Miss Rayne married a son of the painter Robert Haydon. In passing lately along the line going south I have noticed a station called Rayne's Park, and I am happy to suppose that the family have found bricks and mortar more profitable than hay-making.

If the grandmother had confined her invitation to the country we should have looked back on our visits to her with unmixed pleasure, but she habitually lived in Bedford Place, Bloomsbury, a district which became afterwards much identified with Dickens. It was separated from the adjoining district as trenchantly as if it had been in a ring fence. It is very well described in *Vanity Fair*. The inhabitants were eminently respectable, and mostly dull. They went very little afield for their shops or amusements. The lawyers, who were of prodigious numbers, went to their business in Bedford Row, or their chambers in Inns of Court, and business men went to their occupations in the City by the buses, which plied down Holborn or the New Road. The great archway of the Euston Station was a recent intrusion. The district was so little separated from the country, that the smell of hay could be distinctly perceived with a northern wind blowing over Hampstead, though I never heard of a Master in Chancery having hay fever.

I suffered a good deal from my grandmother's pet parson, the Hon. and Rev. Montague Villiers, Rector of St. George, Bloomsbury. The church, besides having a classic portico, has a queer steeple, composed of four pyramidal flights of steps, surmounted by what appears to be a statue of no less

eminent a Christian than one of the Georges in a toga. This steeple was popularly said to be the steps to a bishopric, and so it was, for Villiers was promoted first to Carlisle, and subsequently to Durham. In the pulpit I do not suppose he was duller than anyone else, but I was taken to hear him on compulsion, and the whole service was oppressively tedious and long. But I also suffered from him in private life. He seemed to know when I was on a visit by some sort of sixth sense, and though he was a most courtly, affable man, I used to think he was far too unctuous. He invariably improved the occasion, and he had the air of being desirous of leaving the impression that he had a peculiarly good receipt for living a pious and godly life.

I have been much interested lately, in reading Mrs. Earle's *Memoirs and Memories*, to learn that he wrote letters to members of his family (for he was related to her) as if they shamefully neglected their opportunities, though from what I can gather from the correspondence generally, they were as unaffectedly good as people can well be. But it was the fashion in those days for people to call themselves professing Christians, and openly draw attention to their scheme of life.

He was not a learned man, but belonged to a class called Lord Shaftesbury's bishops. There used to

be a floating story that he was once approached by a curate anxious for an explanation of a tough passage in the Greek Testament. The Bishop had not a working familiarity with the work, and is reported to have taken up a copy of the Authorised Version, saying, " Let us consult the divine original." He had a son-in-law, and the patronage of a fat living fell into his hands. What could be more natural than to unite the two ? To have a bishop's son-in-law for a rector would be undoubtedly good for the parish, and the parish good for the son-in-law. Unfortunately the beneficiary's name was Cheese, and immediately after the appointment, while the cry of nepotism was in the air, *Punch* had a cartoon of a stout ecclesiastic pouring port into a Stilton, and saying, " This cheese wants a little ripening." An enormous number of copies were sold in the parish. If a stranger went into the local booksellers' shop, " Swale & Wilson," almost before the customer could get the words out of his mouth, one or other of them would say, " I know, Sir, the picture of the late Rector."

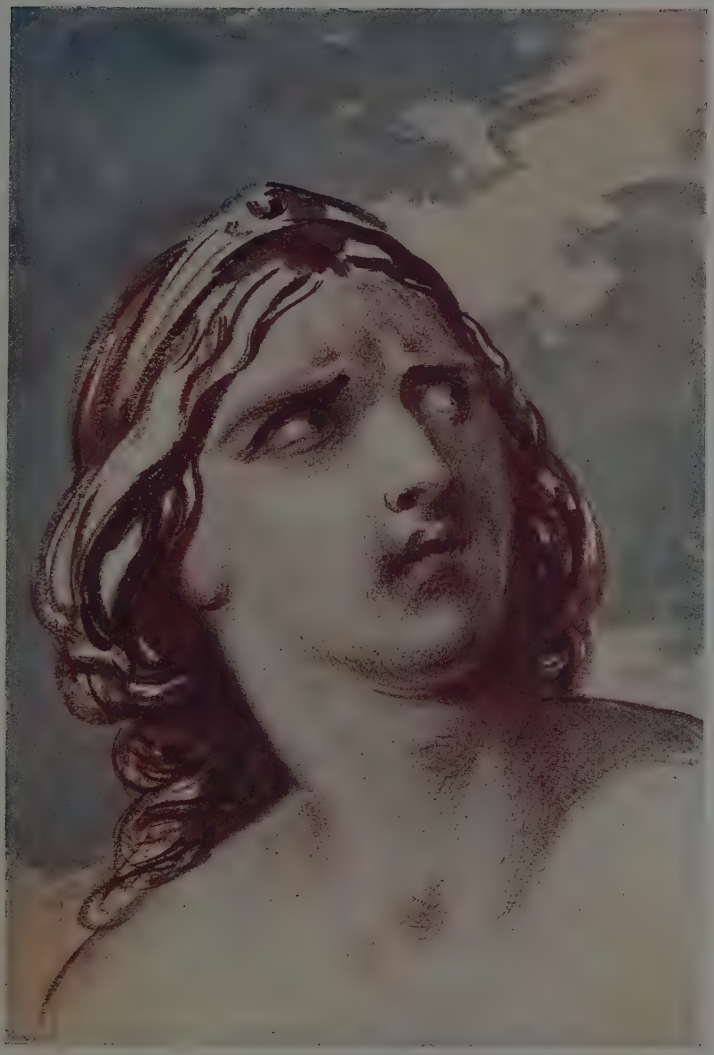
Some time after the foregoing account was written I accidentally came upon a letter from Dickens saying, " I took a young lady unknown down to dinner, and talking to her about the Bishop of Durham's nepotism in the matter of Mr.

Cheese, I found she was Mrs. Cheese" (28th April 1861).

My grandmother evidently had considerable affection for my father, and showed a grandmotherly interest in us, evinced by lessons in deportment and manners, but I never remember her showing the slightest interest in my father's profession. I am sure she never read a line of Dickens, and I am doubtful whether, with the exception of such pictures as hung on our walls, she ever cast an eye on any of his works in her life. The rest of the relations were equally indifferent, with the sole exception of Mr. Elhanan Bicknell.

Naturally there ought to be a considerable number of letters from authors, publishers, and engravers about illustrations, but though it seems scarcely credible, it is the veritable fact that when he was leaving Croydon, Hablot Browne made a bonfire of the accumulated correspondence of many years. Among these manuscripts were hundreds of sketches, either illustrations to books, or designs for works of his own. If they had been merely taken haphazard and bound they would have formed several very interesting volumes. But incredible as this may seem, it is still more astonishing to learn that Dickens, with less excuse, did the same thing. In 1860, at Gad's Hill, he writes :—

"Yesterday I burnt, in the field at Gad's Hill, the accumulated letters and papers of twenty years. They sent up a smoke like the genie when he got out of the casket on the seashore; and as it was an exquisite day when I began, and rained very heavily when I finished, I suspect my correspondence of having overcast the face of the heavens."



HEAD.

Water-colour circa 1850. Reduced from 19¾ in. × 13½ in.

CHAPTER IV

MR. BICKNELL AND HIS FRIENDS

Mr. Elhanan Bicknell was a noteworthy man who became related to Browne by his marriage to my Aunt Lucinda as his second wife. He was the son of a schoolmaster at Dulwich, then a delightful little town on the borders of Kent and Surrey. He began life as an usher in his father's school, but must have exhibited some indications of financial ability, for two friends who were managing, or mismanaging, a business, invited him to join them for the purpose of improving affairs. He fully justified their choice, turned the business into a prosperous concern, and made a huge fortune.

I was about the age of his youngest son. When I first remember him he was living, simply indeed, but in considerable splendour, at Herne Hill. My aunt was a notable woman, and managed her household affairs with a skill truly early Victorian. She had that art of organising which comes from natural capability, and which made the management of a big house and wealth no more difficult

to her than a cottage home would have been, and she always seemed to have leisure for various pursuits.

The house had originally been a medium-sized one. My uncle had built a wing at each end larger than the original structure, so that on the ground floor, among others, there were three large rooms, entirely given up to the display of pictures, which constituted the splendour of the place. In the middle was the old drawing-room. This was a low room, which, for the sake of protection against damp, had been entirely lined with mahogany. The wood was not apparent, as it was covered over with a sort of rococo panelling in white and gold, according to the prevailing taste of the time in drawing-room decorations. The pictures in this room were all water-colours, and were not hung in the usual manner, but inset, the gilded mouldings serving as frames, and the water-colours serving as decorative panels. Turner's "Rivers of France," if I remember rightly, served as decoration of the doors. The effect was altogether admirable, and the individual pictures, when looked into, were found to be works of the most distinguished men of the time.

I have often wondered since, what provision was made for the removal of these precious objects in case of fire.

The dining-room and the big drawing-room were devoted to oils ; in the latter were a considerable number of Turners. Besides the pictures on the walls, Mr. Bicknell had stowed away others of equal importance.

I shall never forget the thrill I experienced when he produced from a portfolio Turner's four Yorkshire drawings which had never been exposed. At the sale after his death, the Marquis of Hertford sent over an agent with strict orders to buy these four drawings regardless of cost. This was unknown at the time, or there might have been some very spirited bidding, but they were bought in fair competition, and they now hang as part of the Wallace Collection in Hertford House.

There is nothing remarkable in a rich man making a collection of pictures, but it was not so common in the early Victorian days, and this was done entirely at first hand, on his own judgment, and without the aid or intervention of dealers. He had a most extensive knowledge of the works of contemporary English painters, and he must have had a shrewd idea of their pecuniary value and prospects, as the collection sold for about three times its original cost, fetching something about eighty thousand pounds. The sale made a great stir. There were

122 oils, including ten important Turners, and 270 water-colours.[1]

Among other interesting works there hung in the drawing-room a pencil sketch of Turner. According to my recollection it represented him as a squat man dressed in a very ill-fitting kind of frockcoat, and holding a cup and saucer in one hand. The preliminary sketch was made by Landseer at a party at Herne Hill for the assistance of Count D'Orsay, who was accustomed to take portraits

[1] The Oil Paintings by Turner included—

Antwerp: Van Goyen looking out for a subject.
Helvoetsluys: The City of Utrecht; 64 going to Sea.
Ivy Bridge, Devonshire.
Wreckers: Coast of Northumberland; Steamboat assisting Ship off the Shore.
Calder Bridge, Cumberland.
Venice: The Campo Santo.
Venice: The Giudecca, Santa Maria della Salute, and San Giorgio Maggiore.
Ehrenbreitstein.
Port Ruysdael.
Palestrina.

The Water-Colours included—

The Himalaya Mountains.
The Rhigi.
The Castle Elz near Coblentz.
Rouen: Château Gaillard.
Lake of Lucerne.

The Four Yorkshire Drawings.

1. Scarborough Castle.
2. Mowbray Lodge, Ripon.
3. The Moor: Grouse Shooting (dogs painted by Stubbs).
4. Woodcock Shooting.

of celebrities and publish them. The Count's finished drawing of Turner was afterwards lithographed and sold in the usual manner.

Mr. Bicknell was, however, restricted in his appreciation of art, and only cared for modern work. On returning from an extensive tour in Italy, undertaken for the purpose of seeing works of art, I remember hearing him say he had not seen a picture he would give a damn for.

In appearance he was a biggish man, with a florid complexion and a rather thick utterance, which in his children became converted into an extreme difficulty with the letter " r ". In order to improve their speech some of them, at all events, were taught elocution by a distinguished actor, Alfred Wigan. Whether it was owing to his efforts, or some other reason, the difficulty disappeared as they attained adult age.

There were seven children, all above the average in personal appearance and intelligence. The eldest daughter, Mrs. Berry, was handsome, a large woman, with splendid physique, regular features, and fine colouring, altogether a very striking personage. Once she had to appear in a county court in consequence of repudiating some claim. The plaintiff, in course of explaining the hardness of his treatment, described how he had actually applied at the house,

and been sent empty away. "Did you see Mrs. Berry herself?" said the Judge. "I cannot remember," said the plaintiff. "What?" said the Judge. "You have seen Mrs. Berry in the witness box, and you cannot remember whether you have seen her before!"

The eldest son by the second wife, Hermann, had a brilliant and versatile intellect, but probably on account of having command of too much money did not possess sufficient stability to keep for long in one groove. He began as surgeon in the Indian Army, but as regimental doctoring was not to his taste he soon gave it up, and took to travelling in Cashmere and other unfrequented parts of the East. His great achievement, known only to a few, was the pilgrimage to Mecca. The accomplishment of this task required enormous patience and perseverance. He was obliged to learn a great number of details, and to transform himself entirely from a European into an Oriental. He even underwent a painful surgical operation which necessitated some weeks in the Suez hospital, and delayed the pilgrimage a whole year. In spite of all his careful preparations for concealing his heretical identity one little lapse nearly cost him his life, but his dragoman had the wit to say that he was only acting as the orthodox in Cashmere did. However, he remains one of the

very few Christians who succeeded in entering Mecca, and coming back again. He meant to write a full account of his adventures, but he was unfortunately prevented doing so by his death. A short statement of the facts appeared in *The Times* of August 1862. In May 1869 he succeeded in entering, in disguise, the shrine of Fatima in the sacred mosque of Kum, which, it is believed, had been seen only once before (in 1821) by a Christian.

The second son, Sidney, lived as a man of means, and though he was for a short time in the Army, he followed no profession, but was an adventurous traveller in many unfrequented parts. He entered Naples with Garibaldi, and wrote a book on the events of the campaign. He was greatly interested in genealogy, and occupied himself in compiling an account of the lives and deaths of the members of three families, viz. the Bicknells, the Brownes, and the Wildes (Mrs. Sidney Bicknell). To accomplish this task he spent a considerable sum of money, and travelled to many places to verify facts from registers, tombstones, and other records. He was greatly interested in my discovery of the name Hablot in Auxerre, and would certainly have journeyed there if he had lived.

In spite of the little encouragement he received he always kept in touch with my father, and in

speaking of his early days, he described him as a handsome man, and repeatedly impressed the fact on me. My memory does not run to that—I do not know that it ever crossed my mind to consider whether he was good-looking or not. I saw my cousin for the last time a few weeks before his death in the autumn of 1911.

The youngest son, Clarence, has lived for many years in the Riviera. He has distinguished himself, I believe, in botany, and published a work on the flora of his district. He is an ardent propagandist of Esperanto.

The house at Herne Hill was a delightful one at which to visit, not only on account of the profusion and excellence of its art treasures, but from the certainty of meeting, especially on Sundays, a number of men occupying distinguished positions in the world of art.

Hither too, but before my time, came frequently a vehement young man who was greatly attached to my aunt. He would read to her long screeds of a work in manuscript. Sometimes he would set the whole household running about fetching colours, brushes, paper, that he might on the spur of the moment copy a flower from the conservatory. He was supposed to be brilliantly clever, and in the course of a few years became recognised as one of

our most original and eloquent writers. He was the son of a near neighbour, and his name—John Ruskin.

Ruskin's fame is part of the glory of English literature. The passion, splendour, and opulence of his style will attract readers for sheer delight, long after his detailed opinions on art have become waste paper. But he has before him a certain immortality in virtue of his works on social science, for in remodelling political economy by the light of Christian ethics he was original and sound.

During the latter years of his life, the workings of his great intellect were hampered by illness. As he had no immediate family he would have had a long period of solitary suffering, but fortunately that was not the case. There were relations who loved and understood him, and devoted their lives in tending on him, so that to the end he lived in the midst of the beautiful Lake country he loved so well. The nation's gratitude is due to Mr. and Mrs. Severn for their unwearied care of John Ruskin in the day of his trouble and darkness.

From the beginning he was capricious in his opinions, and very unwilling to accept a lead from anybody. Mr. Bicknell told me that one day on leaving the dining-room Ruskin's attention was strongly attracted by a large picture by Calcott, called " Cross-

ing the Brook," which hung over the mantelpiece. It was a picture of lofty trees and cattle crossing a shallow stream, the whole suffused with a golden light expressive of the sentiment of evening calm. Ruskin appeared to be looking at it with great enjoyment. Bicknell, after waiting some time, said, "How do you like it, John?" "I don't like it at all," he replied; "I don't care for cows in a ditch," thus exhibiting on a small scale those traits which afterwards became characteristic. The tendency to refuse to acquiesce in an opinion because it was expressed by another, and to deprive a subject of its rights by describing it in lower terms, as in the substitution of the ditch for the ford, was a very effective stroke, but neither truthful nor fair.

I met Mr. Ruskin many years afterwards at the house of Mr. Philip Rathbone. Mr. Ruskin sat surrounded by a bevy of ladies, mostly young, like a modern Apollo in the midst of muses and nymphs. He was holding a desultory conversation after the manner of some philosophers who ask questions and allow their disciples to arrive at the goal by dint of answers which require reiterated correction to make them within a measurable distance of the truth, after the fashion of children playing "man and his object," which are ultimately named by players who are entirely ignorant of both. I

only remember one instance. The professor asked, "What is the characteristic of Greek art?" A very pink young lady opined that it was "Strong." "My dear," said Mr. Ruskin in a very soft voice, "the Devil is strong," and for a time the nymphs were covered with confusion.

The number and importance of Mr. Bicknell's examples certainly contributed a good deal to enhance the appreciation of Turner's gifts, and when we consider that Mr. Ruskin, senior, had also a number of very valuable Turners, we can see how the early life of John Ruskin was so strongly influenced. He had that intimate knowledge which only an early and daily association with these pictures could have furnished, and he brought to bear on the subject an astonishing store of natural facts and phenomena. No flower that grew on the earth, no branch that sprung from a tree, no cloud that floated in the sky, but had been watched and noted, and grouped in his wonderful memory. He endeavoured to coax and coerce painters into an accurate observation and a laborious imitation of natural objects, and he was always ready, out of his accumulated knowledge, to vituperate against anyone who failed in any minute particular. He certainly had immense influence, and if he could have produced genius, instead of merely stimulating patient industry, he

might have founded an immortal school of painting. As it was, it merely resulted in a number of transcripts from Nature so elaborately finished and crowded with bud and blossom, that the pictures could not be seen for the botany. But though his precepts and criticisms of painting are no longer greatly valued, his expositions of the principles of architecture are still of abiding interest and value.

Although the merits and beauties of Gothic architecture had been excellently described, both by writing and drawing, by such men as Pugin, Rickman, and Petit, no one but John Ruskin had laid open the inmost and secret meaning of the art of the Middle Ages. By his upbringing he was narrowly Evangelical, yet his innate sense of rectitude enabled him to see the spiritual and moral side of the great mediæval builders and decorators. He described their technique as deriving its perfection from the underlying piety of the heart rather than from their academic practice of the hand. He disentangled beauty from prettiness. He was more than enthusiastic in his praise of their workmanship. He was also, characteristically, so unfair in his denunciation of all forms of Classic and Renaissance architecture, that no one dare look at it sideways. He positively revolutionised English thought and taste for a time, and if Gothic architecture could by any possibility

SKETCHES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Probably connected with a series illustrating the five senses—a favourite subject. Pen and ink on scraps of letter paper.

SKETCHES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

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Pen and ink on scraps of letter paper.

have been adapted to modern wants, our land would have been covered by imitations and modifications of thirteenth-century work. What really did happen was the erection of a few churches which were actual forgeries of old work, and things like the museum at Oxford.

He began by contributing a series of papers to the *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 on the poetry of architecture, under the *nom de plume* of Kata Phusin (according to Nature). He says himself in the preface to their collection in book form, "The adoption of a *nom de plume* at all implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of *Modern Painters*) a sense of a power of judgment in myself which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim."

He is generally classed as a critic, but he was deficient in the essential qualities of good criticism. He had no sense of justice; he was in reality a great special pleader, and he had the quality of many great special pleaders, of aiding his cause by material which might be effective, but was certainly not veracious. His great book *Modern Painters* had as an avowed theme a demonstration of the greatness and superiority of Turner over every landscape painter of any nation and of any time. In order to make this an effective plea, and addressing himself

to the jury and ignoring the judge (who might probably ask for confirmation of the evidence), he described an imaginary Turner, neglected, persecuted, and dying of a broken heart. It is hardly credible to the present generation how the intelligent and right-thinking people of the sentimental early Victorian time were moved by this pathetic picture. It did not seem to occur to them that a man might be a fine painter and at the same time a prosperous man, so they wasted their tears on the greatest literary bogus of any age.

As a matter of fact, Turner in youth met with an intelligent patron, was admitted an Associate of the Royal Academy at a very early age, had rich men clamouring at his door for pictures that he refused to sell, and died leaving a very large fortune and those of his pictures that he considered his masterpieces to form an integral part of the National Collection.

Though, as I have said, I think the Ruskin and Bicknell Turners had a great influence in forming John Ruskin's mind, I do not think he ever influenced Mr. Bicknell's taste in the slightest degree. Mr. Bicknell had made up his mind about Turner before Ruskin was breeched, and he had that instinctive taste which is an inborn quality with some men, and the faculty of knowing what he liked

and what he did not. He was certainly never persuaded into admiring any of the pre-Raphaelites, who started with Mr. Ruskin as fugleman. I never remember him taking any notice of them except his saying as a sort of pleasantry, "Millais was always bought by telegraph."

Mr. Ruskin, I need hardly remind my readers, poured forth pamphlets, articles, letters to the newspapers, to prove that Turner was really a pre-Raphaelite in disguise, that his young friends were always in the right, and everybody else considerably in the wrong. No one who did not experience it can imagine the excitement at the time. The pamphlets reached the man in the street, or were read aloud at dinner in ladies' schools. All the world talked about Ruskin, or apologetically endeavoured to stand up for the other side. Mr. Ruskin continued his denunciations, sometimes with the acerbity of Serjeant Buzfuz, and sometimes with the haughty majesty of a Hebrew prophet. He dictated for the sake of dictating, and he brooked no opposition. In an evil hour he ran across Mr. Whistler, whose work was the antithesis of anything of which he had ever approved. He said "he had lived long enough to see a coxcomb ask £200 for flinging a paint-pot in the public's face." No man in a public position had a right to

call another a coxcomb, even if he had a white lock and carried a long walking-stick.

Harmless eccentricities are the individual right of any man, and certainly do not affect the quality of the painter's work. Whistler resembled the creature described by the French naturalist, "cet animal est très méchant; quand on l'attaque il se defend."

"Mr. Ruskin," said Whistler, "had no right to criticise pictures. He is not acquainted with the art of painting." "What?" said Mr. Ruskin; "I not acquainted with the art of painting? I have passed my life in contemplation of the old masters." "So," said Whistler, "has the policeman in the National Gallery."

An action at law like that which followed cannot, in the nature of things, bear any relation to serious criticism, and the astonishing effect apparently produced was not due to the verdict, but to the demonstration of the fact that a revolution had silently taken place, and was successful. Mr. Whistler's gibe was as unfair as any of Mr. Ruskin's contemptuous phrases, but it was more fatal, because it was supported by an open contempt of all those standards of right and wrong that had been carefully set up and implicitly believed.

According to the new view, a picture was to be

judged by a competent painter on account of the quality of its paint, and not by a moralist on account of its didactic lesson. It is not the story, nor the archæology, nor even the imitation of natural objects that count. It is the sheer quality of the paint, tone, colour, harmony, and abstract beauty. A picture is an affair of the effect produced upon the eye of the spectator by the eye and the hand of the painter. A difficult and strait gate to enter, and the early Victorian had learnt to walk in a very different path. Mr. Whistler had the courage of his opinions. He had the conviction born of experience, that an easy dab of the brush with exactly the right colour could only be acquired by years of devoted labour and a specially trained mind and hand. So that a hasty scrub of a big brush might really be more laborious than elaborate stippling in spots that could only be seen by a magnifying glass.

When the Grosvenor Gallery was first opened, with the avowed intention of showing works which did not conform to the academical standard, a friend of mine saw in the catalogue, let us say 240, a Nocturne in grey and green, and 301, a Harmony in rose and silver, by Mr. Whistler. On looking at the pictures the colours appeared reversed, as he noticed that 301 had certainly a prevailing tint of green, and 240 of rose and silver. After puzzling over this

for some time, mistrusting his own judgment and fancying he was going colour-blind, he made his way to the secretary, and told him there was an error in the catalogue. "Oh," he said, "hundreds of people have pointed it out to us, and we have told Mr. Whistler." "What did Mr. Whistler say?" "He said it did not matter a damn." Nor did it.

But behind all the flourish there remains a solid rule for guidance in appreciating any artistic works, namely, that under all circumstances the best and worst criticism must involve the personal impression of the spectator, and in spite of all that may be said by the professional critic, an intellectually honest man will judge a work of art in proportion as it embodies qualities he thinks desirable; and the lesson to be derived is, that we can no more afford to be intolerant in art than we can in religion. No one can know more than a little of either, and a word may even be said for the policeman in our National Collection.

Two young artists were wandering in South Kensington, and they came upon a cast of Rodin's "Saint John the Baptist." The work is in the Luxembourg, and the reader will remember that the sculptor has desired to show that the great message was not sent to the world by a person of surpassing beauty and royal appearance, but by a poor peasant, worn

and deformed by poverty and toil, and consequently with no comeliness of shape nor pleasant proportions.

My young friends, with their minds full of academic grace, proceeded after the manner of artists to view the work with much gesticulation and drawing of imaginary lines with their hands, shading their eyes, and discussing the proportions and so forth with great vigour. They especially fell foul of the left shoulder, and they were arranging for a great many alterations to be made to bring this statue into conformity with their ideas. So doing, they became conscious of a stealthy step behind them, and a voice said, "Admiring the Evangelist, gentlemen?" They said, "Well, not exactly admiring, we were criticising. We don't like this," and they pointed, "and we don't like that," and again they fell foul of the left shoulder. The guardian said, "We've got eighteen St. John's on the premises, and I do say for sheer downright ugliness this one takes the cake."

CHAPTER V

DICKENS AND SOME OF HIS ILLUSTRATORS

On the whole Dickens seems to have agreed well with his illustrators, which is more than can be said of many authors, who as a race are touchy, and often as difficult to please as fond mothers with the portraits of their children. He does not seem to have had any very strong perception of the artistic side of drawing and painting, and did not always realise that literary exaggeration can only be represented by caricature.

The basis of his observation of character was a very remarkable realism, to which he added all sorts of ornaments and exaggerations for dramatic presentation. He seems to have been quite unconscious that in some instances the realism was obscured by ornamentation, and that the realist was not apparent.

For literary purposes the outward appearance of a character can be so described as to seem quite independent of, or even opposed to, his moral nature. For pictorial purposes they must agree; it is all very well to write that a man "may smile

and smile and be a villain," but it would be beyond the powers of a draughtsman to make a man smile so as to appear genial, and yet make it apparent that he has a black soul within. He must either look a villain, or he won't represent one. That is where the enormous capacity of the stage for complete expression of emotion is most apparent. An actor by his elocution represents the literary side, and by his facial expression becomes his own illustrator.

In the ordinary routine of business a design was drawn and submitted to Dickens, who made any suggestions that occurred to him, which the illustrator cheerfully adopted. Whether it was from accident that this precautionary measure was omitted or some other reason, on some few occasions the work seems to have passed into its final stage without his having seen the sketch, and in certain instances he did not see the drawings till they were included in the complete book. The first in order of time was an illustration by Cruikshank in *Oliver Twist*, representing Rose Maylie and Oliver standing in front of the memorial tablet put up in memory of Oliver's mother. With this Dickens seems to have been disappointed, and writes in the following manner to Cruikshank: "Without entering into the question of great haste, or any other cause, which may

have led to its being what it is, I am quite sure there can be little difference of opinion between us with respect to the result. May I ask you whether you will object to designing this plate afresh, and doing so *at once*, in order that as few impressions as possible of the present one may go forth? I feel confident you know me too well to feel hurt by this enquiry, and with equal confidence in you I have lost no time in preferring it."

I have not had an opportunity of seeing the original plate, but the revised version is certainly tame and undistinguished.

Then again he disapproves of the sketches made by Leech and Doyle for two illustrations in *The Chimes*. Here both the artists failed in the representation of character according to the author's ideas. Owing to his absence in Italy Dickens did not see the designs, and on his return arranged to have fresh drawings made, as the following letter to his wife explains:—

"*Dec. 2nd*, 1844,
"Piazza Coffee House,
"Covent Garden.

"The little book is now, as far as I am concerned, all ready. One cut of Doyle's and one of Leech's I found so unlike my ideas, that I had them both to breakfast with me this morning, and with that winning manner which you know of, got them with

the highest good humour to do both afresh. They are now hard at it."

On another occasion Dickens considered that Leech had egregiously erred in his illustration to *The Battle of Life* in representing Michael Warden accompanying Marion in flight. Dickens writes from Paris to Forster as follows :—

"When I first saw it, it was with a horror and agony not to be expressed. Of course I need not tell you, my dear fellow, Warden has no business in the elopement scene. He was never there! In the first hot sweat of this surprise and novelty I was going to implore the printing of that sheet to be stopped, and the figure taken out of the block. But when I thought of the pain that this might give to our kind-hearted Leech, and that what is such a monstrous enormity to me, as never having entered my brain, may not so present itself to others, I became more composed, though the fact is wonderful to me."

On this I would remark that our dear delightful Dickens, who when dealing with a comic situation is clear, precise, and lucid, in describing a serious and sentimental incident, is often obscure, and contrives to involve circumstances, which might be

advantageously told plainly, in a fog of mystery which is never cleared away.

We may remind the reader that we first make acquaintance with Dr. Jeddler's ward, Alfred Heathfield, when he is setting out for three years' residence on the Continent to perfect his medical knowledge. He is betrothed to his guardian's youngest daughter, Marion, and it is understood he is to marry her on his return. At the moment of parting we are given a hint that the course of true love may not be altogether smooth, for Grace, the eldest sister, is active in her farewells, and Marion remains inexplicably silent. Alfred says, "Marion, dearest heart, goodbye! Sister Grace! remember!" The quiet household figure, and the face so beautiful in its serenity, were turned towards him in reply; but Marion's look and attitude remained unchanged. The coach was at the gate. There was a bustle with the luggage. The coach drove away. Marion never moved. "He waves his hat to you, my love," said Grace. "Your chosen husband, darling. Look!" The younger sister raised her head, and, for a moment, turned it. Then, turning back again, and fully meeting, for the first time, those calm eyes, fell sobbing on her neck. "Oh, Grace. God bless you! But I cannot bear to see it, Grace! It breaks my heart." Nearly three years after,

Michael Warden, the young squire of the district, has an interview with his lawyers, Craggs and Snitchey, concerning the management of his nearly ruined estate. At the same time he announces he is in love with Marion. The lawyer Snitchey tells him she is engaged. Warden replies, women have been known to change their minds. He says, "I mean, if I can, to marry Marion, the doctor's lovely daughter, and to carry her away with me. I am not going to carry the young lady off without her own consent. There's nothing illegal in it." Mr. Snitchey says, "It can't be done. She dotes on Mr. Alfred." Warden says, "I did not live six weeks some few months ago in the doctor's house for nothing, and I doubted that soon. She would have doted on him if her sister could have brought it about, but I watched them. Marion avoided his name, avoided the subject, shrunk from the least allusion to it, with evident distress.

. . . . . .

"But I mean to do the doctor no wrong or harm, but I hope to rescue his child, my Marion, from what I see. I know she dreads and contemplates with misery, that is, the return of this old lover. If anything in the world is true, 'tis that she dreads his return."

Michael arranges to leave the country that day

month. On the same day a letter is received by the doctor from Alfred, saying he will return that day month. Soon after this we learn that Michael Warden, after the family have retired to rest, has a clandestine interview with Marion in the garden, with the sole connivance of Clemency, the old servant.

" Sorrowing and wondering, Clemency turned the key, and opened the door. Into the dark and doubtful night that lay beyond the threshold Marion passed quickly, holding by her hand. In the dark night he joined her, and they spoke together earnestly and long : and the hand that held so fast by Clemency's now trembled, now turned deadly cold, and now clasped and closed on hers, in the strong feeling of speech it emphasized unconsciously. When they returned, he followed her to the door ; and pausing there a moment, seized the other hand, and pressed it to his lips, then stealthily withdrew. The door was barred and locked again, and once again she stood beneath her father's roof. Not bowed down by the secret she had brought there, though so young, but with that same expression on her face, for which I had no name before, and shining through her tears. Again she thanked and thanked her humble friend, and trusted to her, as she said, with confidence implicitly. Her chamber safely reached,

she fell upon her knees, and with her secret weighing on her heart, could pray! Could rise up from her prayers, so tranquil and serene, and bending over her fond sister in her slumber, look upon her face and smile, though sadly, murmuring as she kissed her forehead, how that Grace had been a mother to her, ever, and she loved her as a child! Could draw the passive arm about her neck when lying down to rest—it seemed to cling there, of its own will, protectingly and tenderly even in sleep—and breathe upon the parted lips, God bless her! Could sink into a peaceful sleep, herself, but for one dream, in which she cried out, in her innocent and touching voice, that she was quite alone, and they had all forgotten her."

The lawyer has another long interview with Michael Warden, who definitely arranged to go away an hour before midnight, when the tide serves. On the day of Alfred's return Dr. Jeddler is giving a party to welcome the traveller home. Towards the end of the party, shortly before Alfred's return, Marion quits her home, without acquainting anyone of the intention, but she leaves a letter saying she has made her innocent and blameless choice, and entreats they will forgive her. He disappears at the same time as Marion; they both disappear into the darkness of the night. He returns without

warning six years afterwards on the same day that she returns to her family, and it is only then that Marion explains the motive which actuated her.

The foregoing is the full and particular account of the occurrence, and it must be obvious that if Dickens did not intentionally mislead the reader, he did so accidentally. The account certainly presents that appearance. Leech not having been specially warned, fell into the trap, as any ordinary reader must have done.

In the illustration by Maclise, Michael Warden is shown with his hand on his heart (the right-hand side!), and Marion is holding Clemency's hand, so that Michael Warden seemed indubitably to have a finger in the pie.

At another time a difficulty arose over one of my father's illustrations to *Dombey and Son*. At the time he began the book Dickens was abroad, and he indicates subjects for illustration, not directly to Browne, but by letter to Forster. Among them he suggested " The best subject for Browne will be at Mrs. Pipchin's, and if he liked to do a quiet odd thing, Paul, Mrs. Pipchin and the cat by the fire, would be very good for the story." Dickens does not seem to have seen the sketch, but when he saw the illustration, he expressed himself as grievously

ILLUSTRATION TO "THE BATTLE OF LIFE."

By J. Leech, showing Michael Warden eloping with Marion.

disappointed with what he considered a misrepresentation of the text. Here follows the text :—

"This celebrated Mrs. Pipchin was a marvellous ill-favoured, ill-conditioned old lady, of a stooping figure, with a mottled face like bad marble, a hook nose, and a hard grey eye, that looked as if it might have been hammered at on an anvil without sustaining any injury. At this exemplary old lady, Paul would sit staring in his little arm-chair by the fire for any length of time. He never seemed to know what weariness was, when he was looking fixedly at Mrs. Pipchin. He was not fond of her, he was not afraid of her; but in those odd moods of his, she seemed to have a grotesque attraction for him. There he would sit, looking at her, and warming his hands, and looking at her, until he sometimes quite confounded Mrs. Pipchin, Ogress as she was.

"From that time, Mrs. Pipchin appeared to have something of the same odd kind of attraction towards Paul, as Paul had towards her. She would make him move his chair to her side of the fire, instead of sitting opposite; and there he would remain in a nook between Mrs. Pipchin and the fender, with all the light of his little face absorbed into the black bombazeen drapery, studying every line and wrinkle of her countenance, and peering at

the hard grey eye, until Mrs. Pipchin was fain to shut it, on pretence of dozing. Mrs. Pipchin had an old black cat, who generally lay coiled upon the centre foot of the fender, purring egotistically, and winking at the fire until the contracted pupils of his eyes were like two notes of admiration. The good old lady might have been—not to record it disrespectfully—a witch, and Paul and the cat her two familiars, as they all sat by the fire together."

The above extract contains every word of description that could be of any guide to the illustrator. Her hard grey eye, her mottled complexion, quite incapable of representation in black and white. Dickens in his mind's eye had in view an old lady with whom he lodged in Camden-town during that period of misery and suffering at the blacking warehouse. In an account of his own life he writes to Forster as follows :—

" The key of the house was sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it ; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to anyone) was handed over as a lodger to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little-college Street, Camden-town, who took children in to board, and had once done so at Brighton ; and who, with

a few alterations and embellishments, unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey*, when she took me in. She had a little brother and sister under her care then ; somebody's natural children, who were very irregularly paid for ; and a widow's little son. The two boys and I slept in the same room. My own exclusive breakfast, of a penny cottage loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf, and a quarter of a pound of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard."

The etching evidently did not correspond with Dickens' preconceived idea, and he writes in his exaggerated manner :—

" I am really distressed by the illustration of Mrs. Pipchin and Paul. It is so frightfully and wildly wide of the mark. Good Heaven ! In the commonest and most literal construction of the text, it is all wrong. She is described as an old lady, and Paul's ' miniature arm-chair ' is mentioned more than once. He ought to be sitting in a little arm-chair down in the corner of the fireplace, staring up at her. I can't say what pain and vexation it is to be so utterly misrepresented. I would cheerfully have given a hundred pounds to have kept this illustration out of the book. He never could

have got that idea of Mrs. Pipchin if he had attended to the text. Indeed I think he does better without the text; for then the notion is made easy to him in short description, and he can't help taking it in."

In regard to the chair, it is mentioned in an earlier part of the book as a miniature arm-chair, and once as a "little chair" and as "his chair" without any qualifying adjective. Two points may be noticed. Dickens was thinking of a particular old lady, and expected to see her in the illustration, and was therefore disappointed when he saw Browne's old lady; who was similar, but not the same, and, Dickens imagined, or remembered, a child's chair with short legs, but Browne imagined a child's chair with long legs, and a foot-rest, but it is not "frightfully and wildly wide of the mark," and of course there is an artistic reason for putting little Paul where he is, as to have put him lower down would have left a gap in the composition, and Paul is seated in a nook between Mrs. Pipchin and the fireplace. Sir Frederick Wedmore, the distinguished art critic, in a comparison between Browne's drawing and etching, speaks thus: "In *Dombey* the drawing of Dr. Blimber walking out with his 'young gentlemen' excels in fine expressiveness the etching, good as that is; and desirable as the

etchings are to possess, seeing that the first copies cannot be multiplied, it is to be feared the superiority of the drawing must be again allowed in the lovely design of little Dombey sitting up in his high chair under Mrs. Pipchin's mantelpiece, and in that of the devoted Florence doing Paul's exercises while a stupid companion slumbers by the wall. In a word, the drawings are often better than the prints, because though Hablot Browne was an expressive etcher and handled the needle artfully, yet his command was more curiously complete over one of the most delicate tools ever invented for the suggestion of the artistic fancy—the common lead-pencil."

The conclusion inevitably forced upon us is that Dickens was suffering from a nervous breakdown of a nature that makes the slightest contretemps unbearable, and also suffering (in consequence of the approaching death of little Paul) from that species of emotion which he had formerly experienced when he approached the death of Nell in the *Old Curiosity Shop*. One thing is certain, that this dissatisfaction never reached Browne's ears, for he was so good-natured, prolific and rapid, that he would have thought nothing of producing another plate. At the beginning of the work, when he desired to know from Dickens what *Dombey* was like,

he did not merely sketch off one head, but twenty-nine; and Dickens himself, in writing of the cover, says, "I think the cover very good, perhaps with a little too much in it, but that is an ungrateful objection." But to show that the most intimate acquaintance with the text will not always preserve even the author (let alone the illustrator) from making small slips, we find Dickens himself describing old Sol "squeezing both the Captain's hands with uncommon fervour." Well may we say "in the commonest and most literal construction of the text it is all wrong," as everybody knows Captain Cuttle had only one hand and a hook. But the fact is, no text or set of illustrations is likely to be found without errors which have crept in and escaped correction. That Dickens afterwards thought enormously highly of the drawings can be seen by the following letter :—

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
Thirteenth June, 1848.

MY DEAR BROWNE,—A thousand thanks for the *Dombey* sketches, which I shall preserve and transmit as heirlooms.

This afternoon, or Thursday, I shall be near the whereabout of the boy in the flannel gown, and will pay him an affectionate visit. But I warn you, now and beforehand (and this is final you'll observe),

that you are not a-going to back out of the pigmental finishing of said boy, for if ever I had a boy of my own, that boy is

MINE!

and, as the Demon says at the Surrey,

I CLAIM MY VICTIM.
HA! HA! HA!

at which you will imagine me going down a sulphurous trap, with the boy in my grasp—and you will please not to imagine him merely in my grasp, but to hand him over.

For which this is your warrant and requirement.

(Signed) CHARLES DICKENS.

Witness: William Topping,
his groom.

CHAPTER VI

THE REPUTED ORIGINALS OF SOME DICKENS CHARACTERS

Among the minor celebrities whom I ought to mention are Samuel Carter Hall and Anna Maria, his wife. They were connecting links between art and literature. He was the Editor of the *Art Journal*, an excellent illustrated periodical. Each number had three line-engravings, sundry woodcuts, besides letterpress. Amongst other things they published engravings of a considerable number of Turner's best pictures. Jointly the Halls produced a big book on Ireland, its people, scenery, and characters. It was lavishly illustrated; I believe my father had something to do with it, but I cannot clearly remember how much. Although he was the figure-head, she was supposed to carry the brains. In later times he had fictitious celebrity on account of being the reputed model for Pecksniff. It is true he did affect that mild and persuasive piety that is imputed to the character, but the resemblance went no farther. We must remember Dickens' uncomfortable trick of compounding his

"WINE."

Design in red chalk for a decorative panel on a sideboard—one of a pair. The other represents "Water." Reduced from 10½ *in.* × 6 *in.*

characters from more than one original, and it must not be supposed that Hall resembled Pecksniff in anything but an unctuous manner and a godly way of speech. Pecksniff was before all things a sneaking, contriving villain, hiding his wickedness under an appearance of godliness and high morality. There was no reason to suppose that Hall was anything but what he seemed. It was the fashion of the time to be pious, and to let your piety be known. Hall was only a rather more brilliant performer in an art which had many professors. Among the general public Hall was probably accepted at his own valuation, but literary men generally, from Molière downwards, have been suspicious and intolerant of any kind of hypocrisy ; they are not allured, but repelled. This is illustrated by Tom Hood in his Ode to Rae Wilson, where the groom, speaking of the overreaching nature of a man who was trying to sell a house, says :

> "He axed sure*ly* a sum prodigious,
> And drove a bargain precious hard,
> But being so particularly religious,
> Why, that, you see, put Master on his guard."

Although Hall happened to exhibit the means of hiding a villainous nature, it does not necessarily follow that he had a villainous nature to hide.

Dickens undoubtedly had a genuine dislike for his ways. Probably his connection with art was the occult reason why Mr. Pecksniff happened to be an architect, and he was moved to the neighbourhood of Salisbury to cover up the trail, for assuredly there was not the slightest reason given why he was placed there; indeed, it seems an inconvenient and unpropitious place for an architect, and especially inconvenient for the assemblage of relations of whom we have a transient glimpse in the opening chapters.

I saw S. C. Hall a good many years after the publication of *Chuzzlewit;* he then appeared to be a benevolent, kindly, white-haired old gentleman, profoundly interested in Spiritualism. It was at a seance, whereto a considerable company was invited to witness the doings of a man (a medium) and a boy and girl (subjects), humbugs all three. Hall seemed to me one of the most credulous of the party, and swallowed any bait that was cast before him. The performance was of a low type, consisting of tricks that could have been performed in a show at a fair. The girl assumed a cataleptic rigidity, and defied the efforts of strong men to bind her limbs. She also raised a stout man in an arm-chair from the ground. Under various guises these tricks have been seen before and since, and their success some-

times said to be due to electricity or animal magnetism, well-known causes of the miraculous when spiritual influence runs short. The boy was strongly magnetic, and was said to be greatly affected by metals. When he was told to touch the brass handle of a door, he shied and whimpered, and betrayed intense reluctance to go near it. Being violently scolded by the man, with many contortions he shuffled across the room, and was finally made to touch the door handle with the tips of his fingers. At the moment of contact he was thrown violently back, and fell on the floor in a sort of epileptic fit. Then occurred a unrehearsed incident. He seated himself on the corner of a sofa in a sulky attitude. An old gentleman who had shown a lively interest in his proceedings sat down by him, and set to work to feel his head. Suddenly there was a yell of terror, a snarl, a struggle, the boy had turned, and was seen to be busily engaged in throttling his tormentor. He was dragged off, and the old gentleman, as soon as he could recover a little breath, exclaimed with great satisfaction, "I must have touched the bump of combativeness." The boy did not smile, but he had evidently enjoyed his triumph, and as he was obviously acting under spiritual influence, he was admired, and even the old phrenologist was gratified.

Those were the days of table-turning, when people asked their friends to dinner, and passed the evening furniture moving. The spirits had many a lively evening, but tables have since then quieted down under the mundane influence of "bridge." But to believe in spiritual agencies playing foolish pranks under the guidance of a third-rate conjurer is certainly not in any sense of the word wicked, and Hall's amiable weakness is not mentioned in connection with Pecksniff, but it must be owned that there was no special characteristic about Pecksniff clearly identifying him with Hall. A reader who knew Hall might read the account of Pecksniff without suspecting the source of his origin, so no one could have any cause for grievance.

But it was different in the case of Leigh Hunt, whom Dickens confessedly used as a model for Harold Skimpole in *Bleak House*. He was, besides being Editor of the *Examiner*, a poet and pleasant essayist, a great supporter of Keats, and though he might appear to be nothing greater than a literary man with elegant tastes, there was in him an underlying vein of seriousness sufficiently deep to get him into trouble. He was imprisoned for two years on account of libelling or defaming the character of the Prince Regent. Though technically amenable to the law, public sympathy was on his side, and

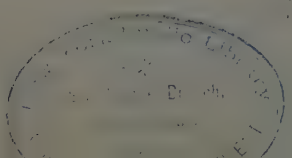
in the present day he would properly be considered an upholder of morality. Thackeray, a few years later, expressed the same sort of view of the same exalted personage with full approbation of everybody. Hunt was a kind of Socialist, and like many of the species, had a convenient notion that it was only right and proper that those who were better off than himself should supply his needs when he was in low water, and as high tide very seldom occurred, he had not the opportunity of testing the truth of his theory by applying it in an opposite direction. His manner of living and speaking is amusingly caricatured in Skimpole, and not altogether untruthfully, but unfortunately he is made at the same time to appear as an unscrupulous man, hiding his irregularities under an affectation of childishness. The idea that Skimpole was intended as a portrait of Leigh Hunt got abroad at a very early date, and circulated as a bit of mischievous gossip, even before the number in which he first appears was published, and so well was the imitation executed, that Forster and Barry Cornwall saw a resemblance, and solemnly warned Dickens of the danger he was running.

But Hunt, however irresponsibly he might talk, would not have covered a bad action by persiflage. He would never have taken a bribe from a scheming attorney, nor would he have behaved

inhumanly towards a poor castaway like "Jo," as Skimpole did. A man who had gone into prison for conscience' sake had surely a strong hold on the distinction between right and wrong. Dickens was warned of the trouble that was likely to arise, and it seems strange that he did not entirely suppress the objectionable parts of the character. It was no unusual thing for him to have a carefully worked out amusing character who had no particular connection with the plot, and Skimpole might have been paired off against Mrs. Jellaby as living contentedly in a prodigious muddle, in contrast to the orderliness of Bleak House, or the formality of Chesney Wold, and no great harm would have been done. Dickens, however, clung obstinately to the objectionable character he had originally compounded, and when he found that Hunt was naturally hurt and offended, he was obliged to apologise, but he did so reluctantly. But it is radically a faulty method to ingraft the traits that belong to an artificial character on to one that is natural. However inconsistent a man's actions may be, he is always himself, and not sometimes another person. Skimpole in his way was a humbug, a cheerful humbug, and the light and airy way in which he describes his pleasure in the sunshine, fruit, and wine is certainly entertaining, and without offence might have been allowed as bearing a resem-

blance to the harmless affectations of a poetic genius. But you cannot invite a reader to separate characteristics which are harmless and genuine from those which are fictitious and detestable. We scarcely need Dickens' disclaimer that he intended no harm, but he certainly was betrayed into doing a wrong both to his model and to the character he intended to portray. He evidently was under the impression that he had altered some of the marks of likeness, for he writes to Forster, " Browne has done Skimpole, and helped to make him singularly unlike the great original." The matter will be made clearer by quotation from Esther's narrative. Mr. Jarndyce, with Esther and Ada, call on Mr. Skimpole at his residence in the Polygon, Somers Town. Esther describes the scene as follows :—

" We went upstairs to the first floor, still seeing no other furniture than the dirty footprints. Mr. Jarndyce, without further ceremony, entered a room there, and we followed. It was dingy enough, and not at all clean, but furnished with an odd kind of shabby luxury, with a large footstool, a sofa, plenty of cushions, an easy-chair, and plenty of pillows, a piano, books, drawing materials, music, newspapers, and a few sketches and pictures. A broken pane of glass in one of the dirty windows was papered and wafered over ; but there was a



little plate of hothouse nectarines on the table, and there was another of grapes, and another of sponge cakes, and there was a bottle of light wine. Mr. Skimpole himself reclined upon a sofa in a dressing-gown, drinking some fragrant coffee from an old china cup—it was then about mid-day—and looking at a collection of wallflowers in the balcony. He was not in the least disconcerted by our appearance, but rose and received us in his usual airy manner. 'Here I am, you see!' he said when we were seated; not without some little difficulty, the greater part of the chairs being broken. 'Here I am! This is my frugal breakfast. Some men want legs of beef and mutton for breakfast; I don't. Give me my peach, my cup of coffee, and my claret; I am content. I don't want them for themselves, but they remind me of the sun. There's nothing solar about legs of beef and mutton. Mere animal satisfaction!' 'This is our friend's consulting room (or would be, if ever he prescribed), his sanctum, his studio,' said my guardian to us. 'Yes,' said Mr. Skimpole, turning his bright face about, 'this is the bird's cage. This is where the bird lives and sings. They pluck his feathers now and then, and clip his wings; but he sings, he sings!'

"He handed us the grapes, repeating in his radiant

way, 'He sings; not an ambitious note, but still he sings.' 'These are very fine,' said my guardian. 'A present?' 'No,' he answered. 'No! Some amiable gardener sells them. His man wanted to know, when he brought them last evening, whether he should wait for the money. "Really, my friend," I said, "I think not—if your time is of any value to you." I suppose it was, for he went away.'"

This is undeniably Leigh Hunt, and there is no great offence in it.

The second extract tells how "Jo," the outcast, has been found sick and weary with wandering. Esther takes him home, and shows him to Mr. Jarndyce and Harold Skimpole.

"'This is a sorrowful case,' said my guardian, after asking him a question or two, and touching him, and examining his eyes. 'What do you say, Leonard?' 'You had better turn him out,' said Mr. Skimpole. 'What do you mean?' enquired my guardian almost sternly. 'My dear Jarndyce,' said Mr. Skimpole, 'you know what I am: I am a child. Be cross to me if I deserve it. But I have a constitutional objection to this sort of thing. I always had, when I was a medical man. He's not safe, you know. There's a very bad sort of fever about him.' Mr. Skimpole had retreated from the hall to the drawing-room again, and said this

in his airy way, seated on the music-stool as we stood by. 'You'll say it's childish,' observed Mr. Skimpole, looking gaily at us. 'Well, I dare say it may be; but I *am* a child, and I never pretend to be anything else. If you put him out in the road, you only put him where he was before. He will be no worse off than he was, you know. Even make him better off, if you like. Give him sixpence, or five shillings, or five pound ten—you are arithmeticians, and I am not—and get rid of him!' 'And what is he to do then?' asked my guardian. 'Upon my life,' said Mr. Skimpole, shrugging his shoulders with his engaging smile, 'I have not the least idea what he is to do then. But I have no doubt he'll do it.'"

This also is the voice of Harold Skimpole, but the character is completely altered, and certainly very unlike Leigh Hunt, and a serious reflection upon any man's humanity.

The third extract shows how the detective engaged in investigating Mr. Tulkinghorn's murder contrived to get hold of "Jo," who has been put to bed in the loft.

"'He's a queer bird is Harold,' said Mr. Bucket, eyeing me with great expression. 'He is a singular character,' said I. 'No idea of money,' observed Mr. Bucket—'he takes it though!' I involuntarily

returned for answer, that I perceived Mr. Bucket knew him. 'Why, now, I'll tell you, Miss Summerson,' he rejoined. 'Your mind will be all the better for not running on one point too continually, and I'll tell you for a change. It was him as pointed out to me where Toughey was. I made up my mind, that night, to come to the door and ask for Toughey, if that was all; but willing to try a move or so at first, if any such was on the board, I just pitched up a morsel of gravel at that window where I saw a shadow. As soon as Harold opens it and I have had a look at him, thinks I, you're the man for me. So I smoothed him down a bit, about not wanting to disturb the family after they were gone to bed, and about its being a thing to be regretted that charitable young ladies should harbour vagrants; and then, when I pretty well understood his ways, I said I should consider a fypunnote well bestowed if I could relieve the premises of Toughey without causing any noise or trouble. Then says he, lifting up his eyebrows in the gayest way, 'It's no use mentioning a fypunnote to me, my friend, because I'm a mere child in such matters, and have no idea of money.' Of course I understood what his taking it so easy meant; and being now quite sure he was the man for me, I wrapped the note round a little stone and threw it up to him. Well! He laughs

and beams, and looks as innocent as you like, and says, 'But I don't know the value of these things. What am I to *do* with this?' 'Spend it, Sir,' said I. 'But I shall be taken in,' he says, 'they won't give me the right change, I shall lose it, it's no use to me.' Lord, you never saw such a face as he carried with it! Of course he told me where to find Toughey, and I found him.'"

This is also Harold Skimpole, and not Leigh Hunt.

The Leigh Hunt episode was familiarly known to the whole of the inner circle, which was generally well informed on all matters of the kind. London was a comparatively small town, and those who were engaged in the business of amusing the public, however they might hold themselves aloof, lived in a ring fence, and were continually in touch with one another. News spread mysteriously, as it is said to do amongst the Indians, but we must remember that there was a constant intercommunication between authors, artists, engravers, printers, and the like, and anything interesting was continually carried to and fro by a mob of subordinates. What we did not learn from these sources was sure to be filtered to us through Robert Young, who was personally in constant communication with a great variety of people.

The affair was much more widely known

than Forster would lead us to suppose, and the general opinion was strongly in favour of Hunt. Dickens, however, was supposed to have done his best to have put matters right. It was a case for radical measures, and Dickens only tried palliation. After owning that Hunt was the great original, and thereby settling the matter, he tried to persuade himself that it was equally fitting to 50,000 other people, which, as Euclid wisely observes, is absurd. After successfully making Hunt's airy manner exactly fit Skimpole, he took great pains to destroy the likeness, and probably by taking out some of the caricature left the reality more apparent. He says that he has done something by changing the name Leonard to that of Harold, but the reader will notice that the original name still remains in the second quotation, where Mr. Jarndyce addresses Skimpole as Leonard, thus illustrating the incompleteness of the reconstruction.

There is no doubt Dickens floundered and failed to extricate himself. The episode is interesting in supplying a little light on Dickens' method of working up a character. Having joined two incompatible characters, he so fused and welded them by the fire of his imagination that they became one, and consequently not separable again to him. He regarded his characters, however oddly they

were compounded, as realities, and could not take them to pieces by a mere effort of the will. Therefore it was impossible for him to subtract the objectionable features of Skimpole without affecting the whole. He did not feel, as his readers certainly did, that the light and airy manner of Skimpole, assumed for the purpose of veiling his chicanery, had no note of joyousness in it, and made the whole character insincere and repellent. It was only hypocrisy under another name, and Skimpole became an inferior Pecksniff. But his readers did not possess an imagination which enabled them to separate the two elements in the character, and Dickens was such a master in the description of a certain person, that all the qualities described would be assumed to be equally true, so that the victim was, as it were, condemned for another man's sins, like the unfortunate hero in the *Lyons' Mail.*

In the case of Miss Mowcher (*David Copperfield*), Dickens, as we learn on the authority of Forster, had a narrow escape. I have already mentioned the original as being known to me as a most respectable lady, earning her living in the honourable exercise of a useful calling, but distinguished by certain unmistakable physical peculiarities. These being described by Dickens with his usual accuracy and detail, served as an infallible means of identifica-

tion. It is therefore not surprising that the lady wrote an expostulation. Forster quotes from Dickens, "I have had the queerest adventure this morning (28th of December 1849), the receipt of the enclosed from Miss Mowcher! It is serio-comic, but there is no doubt one is wrong in being tempted to such a use of power." Forster goes on to say that Dickens was shocked at discovering the pain he had given, and had sent assurances to the complainant that he was grieved and surprised beyond measure, as he had not intended her altogether, but all his characters being made up out of many people were composite, and therefore never individual. He further wrote to Forster "That he had intended to employ the character in an unpleasant way, but he would, whatever the risk or inconvenience, change it all, so that nothing but an agreeable impression should be left. The reader will remember how this was managed, and that the thirty-second chapter went far to undo what the twenty-second had done."

But supposing "Miss Mowcher" had not happened to see the chapter twenty-second on its first appearance, the character might have been described on the unpleasant lines only too plainly intended, and the great wrong irretrievably done.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEATRE: MACREADY, THE KEANS, PHELPS AND SADLER'S WELLS, ROBSON, T. P. COOKE

It must be confessed that although the early Victorians of the professional class led blameless lives, they would be considered dull by the present generation. There were not the numerous theatres which now exist. There were no picturedromes for a very good reason, and practically no music halls that a well-bred person would put his nose in. Dining at a restaurant was almost unknown, week-ends were not invented. Travel beyond the degree of a walking tour was only for the rich and leisured. There was no golf except on Blackheath or in Scotland. Cards were played, whist predominating, though various gambling games were by no means unknown. Still from time to time the early Victorian required some recreation other than that afforded by the domestic hearth, and therefore occasionally he visited the theatre in a critical frame of mind, having a distinct preference for the legiti-

mate drama, and a clear perception how certain characters ought to be played.

Every reader of Dickens' Life must remember his passionate addiction to the theatre, and his special admiration and friendship for Macready. This curious man, who detested his profession, took his farewell of the stage in 1851. My father knew him, and as a matter of compliment went to the farewell performance, though he had not a whole-hearted admiration for him as an actor. He complained of certain mannerisms, excessive pauses, and some defects in delivery which he evidently disliked. It is only fair to say that he was not very fond of Shakespere on the stage, as he considered a performance occasionally destroyed his ideal. He was a constant reader of Shakespere, and had a curious preference for *Cymbeline*, which he called the poet's play. Years afterwards this opinion was confirmed by Mr. Swinburne, a poet, if ever there was a poet, who ends his panegyric on the bard with the words, "The play of plays, which is *Cymbeline*." This shows that Browne, contrary to expectation, was more sensitive to the poetic than the dramatic qualities of the works. He carried a volume of a very small edition of the plays in his waistcoat pocket, and he continued that custom until a week or so of his death. I was too young to have seen Macready, but I have

a remembrance of his retirement from hearsay and seeing pictures of the event in a back number of the *Illustrated London News*. I was myself a reader of Shakespere from a very early age, partly incited thereto, perhaps, by having for some time a nurse who was named Shakespere. Some of our friends (who probably also belonged to the circle of Mr. Peter Magnus) were amused by hearing a small child shouting the illustrious name up the nursery stairs. I also had the opportunity, which I commend to all parents, of a free run of Mr. Knight's excellent pictorial edition, the illustrations and the notes to which beguiled me into the knowledge of the works almost as soon as I could read, and long before I could comprehend what it was all about.

In this and other matters my father was not theoretically an educationist, but he had certain practical ideas which were excellent. We were not forced into learning to read, but we were beguiled into acquiring the art because we found it was worth while. Later on, we went to the theatre when there was anything that attracted us. Even in those days there was a late train back to Croydon. Sometimes in very fine weather we managed the transit by driving. The theatrical centre of gravity had shifted from Drury Lane to the Princess' Theatre in Oxford Street, and the leading position was held by Charles,

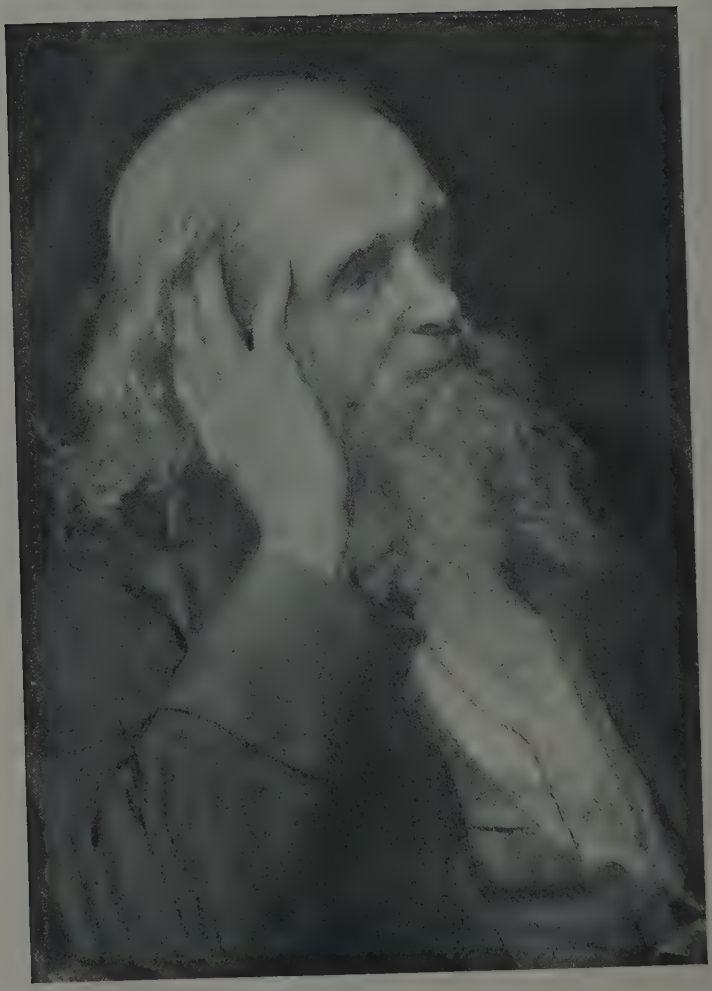
son of Edmund Kean. He was a little man, with an insignificant nose and a guttural voice, jerky and undignified in his action, and without a trace of the paternal fire. He was a well-read painstaking man, and if scholarship ever contributed anything towards the making of an actor, he would have achieved a distinguished position. He knew how everything ought to be acted, but fell short in the execution for the lack of emotional power. Still he played Shakesperean parts with so much intelligence, that he must be counted as one of the long line of those who have kept Shakespere in the front as an acting author.

But his best parts were in such plays as the *Corsican Brothers* and *Louis the Eleventh*. His wife was a really excellent actress, with a fine contralto voice and a good stage presence, albeit she would have been improved by a little banting; but she was exceedingly skilful in concealing her fulness of outline, so much so, that she actually succeeded in Hermione, a difficult task, as though it is always easy to pad out from leanness, a reduction in circumference involves an enormous amount of skill in cutting and contriving garments so as to deceive the eye. Behind the scenes she was a very dragon of virtue, and ruled her little court with no less virginal propriety than did Queen Victoria herself.

Everything was splendidly managed, down to the parting of the hair of the meanest super, and Kean issued playbills (now called programmes) containing historical and archæological hints and statements of why he had chosen particular costumes and special architectural features and no others, so that altogether there was a certain solemnity and responsibility which made a visit to the Princess's a serious matter, like going to the Français; when we laughed we laughed decorously, as we would at a dinner party, and we never forgot our manners.

The first play I remember was *Twelfth Night*, which I have reason to believe was admirably played. I was very well acquainted with the text, and was delighted by seeing the characters actually living and moving. Afterwards Charles Kean began a series of revivals, in which archæology, tailoring, and stage carpentry were brought to a perfection never before seen. *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII*, and other plays were magnificently mounted, and attracted enormous audiences.

In this connection I may refer to another early Victorian who belonged to a practical, and not an artistic, family, but who strongly influenced me in the direction of the poetic drama. I was sent to school at Bruce Castle, Tottenham, then kept by



ARTHUR HILL.

From a chalk drawing (reduced).

Arthur Hill, brother of Rowland Hill, originator of the Penny Postage.[1]

When I first knew him he was an elderly man with long grey hair, and possessed of great activity of mind and body; he devoted an enormous amount of attention to promoting punctuality throughout the school. I am not sure that his efforts led to any permanent results. But he had one habit which did not appear on the prospectus, of continually learning Shakespere by rote. At an early hour every morning, except Sundays, he disappeared by a postern gate with an octavo volume under his arm. He reappeared in about an hour, having combined physical exercise with his lesson. He always had three plays on hand, one which might be a little forgotten, another in a state of perfection, and a third which was beginning to be prepared.

On certain evenings he would invite any of us who cared to come into the drawing-room. Placing a volume on a reading desk to be ready in case of emergencies, he would recite to us (not read) for an hour or so, giving all the characters, stage directions, and necessary explanations as he went along. He used to enjoy himself thoroughly, and so did we.

He encouraged us to perform plays on our own account, and we had a kind of portable proscenium

[1] *Vide infra.*

which could be fitted up by the school carpenter in the fives court. His son, Gray Hill (now Sir John Gray Hill of Liverpool), himself an excellent declamatory actor, was stage manager. One of my brothers and myself were valued as scene painters, and produced some surprising results in distemper.

On one occasion I won great distinction as an actor. I think the play was called *Brutus*, and I had to enact the part of a Roman whose wife had been massacred behind the scenes. I had to make my entrance overcome with emotion, exhorting my fellow-citizens to share my grief. My opening words were, "Howl, howl, ye men of Rome." As I was pushed on to the stage by the prompter or some other friend, I was not only in a state of stage fright on account of being close to the audience, and painfully conscious of my legs, which being insufficiently protected by a pair of housemaid's stockings filled me with a sense of indelicacy, so that I visibly shook from head to foot, in spite of strenuous efforts to keep steady. After the performance, when I was more nearly dead than alive, a lady belonging to the family asked that I should be introduced to her, saying, "I like that boy, he felt his part, his very legs trembled."

This was my first and greatest dramatic triumph,

but it was bought at the price of so much suffering, that I have never since felt the slightest desire to shine upon any stage.

But above all, some of us who desired, on Saturday nights, were allowed to go, in charge of Gray Hill as prefect, to the performance at Sadler's Wells. That was really going to the play! It was possible then to walk from Bruce Castle to Islington almost entirely through country, and we walked briskly so as to be well against the pit door amongst the very earliest arrivals; and then with our blood well warmed with healthy exercise, we waited with perfect content until some mysterious being drew back a bolt, when we rushed in as if there was not a second to spare, to take up our places on the front row of the pit, an advantageous and much coveted position against the orchestra, stalls not being then in existence. As we were in possession of a few halfpenny playbills we had plenty of time and subject for conversation before the curtain rose, and we were rewarded with an excellent all-round performance of a Shakesperean play.

Phelps, the actor-manager, was a good all-round tragedian of the old-fashioned elocutionary class, with a mysterious face, and small twinkling eyes and a stalwart figure. He had a great intelligence and a profound knowledge of the

bard, and he continued to produce all the plays, and not merely the twelve, that Henry Irving thought were all that were playable on the modern stage. He did not stop to consider whether a play was or was not actable, but he acted it, and he did not trouble about scenery, archæology, or costume, and therefore one play cost no more than another. It was a mere question of rehearsals. With him it was the words, and the appropriate actions to carry them over the footlights, that mattered—the rest was only leather and prunella; and if the leather was a bit fissured and the prunella ragged, we cared not, as we were concentrated on the bard and his prophet, Phelps. In tragedy he was good, and though he somewhat dragged at times, he was generally interesting and sometimes moving, as in the ending of Othello, and the death of Lear.

He attracted around him an excellent troupe. Amongst the men I only remember Mr. Marston, the ghost in *Hamlet*, and Mr. Rae, the Polonius, "the rest I have forgot." One night this last must have dressed in a hurry, for though he wore his crimson tights beneath his velvet gaberdine, he had only hastily rolled up his everyday trousers, and that not too securely, for when he gave his valedictory advice to Laertes, saying impressively "costly thy habit as thy purse can buy," in apparent accompani-

ment to the words the left trouser leg unfolded itself and descended, so that he presented the remarkable appearance of a Danish gentleman with one leg crimson like a flamingo, and the other in a well-worn and muddy grey of the early Victorian pedestrian. Whether Mr. Rae was or was not conscious of the change in his appearance, the speech had to be delivered, and it was finished to the inexpressible—I flatter myself "inexpressible" is a good word—delight of the pit and the gallery.

Phelps may have had the defects of his temperament in tragedy, but in high comedy he was most excellent.

Bottom, Falstaff, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant were all as good as need be, and have never been improved on.

The actresses were more frequently changed than the men, as I seem to remember that we saw Miss Glynn, Miss Atkinson, Miss Heath, and Miss Herbert. I think they all played at other theatres, but the men were to all intents and purposes permanent.

Phelps himself is reported, like Mr. Crummles, to have carried the tragedian into private life, and that his slow stage utterance had become with him second nature. This was especially noticeable when he was unfolding a humorous idea, as his funereal utterance contrasted very funnily with the jocosity.

One of his stories which lent itself to imitation was retailed to me, to the following effect, with a tremendous and indescribable emphasis on the vowel sounds. "I was standing the other day, after rehearsal, at the side, when, looking across, who should I see but Herman Vezin, dressed to the nines. White hat, if you please, blue tie, white waistcoat, linen cuffs, frockcoat, grey trousers and white spats—quite the dandy—so I crossed over and said, 'How do you do, Mr. Vezin?' and after a few words of ordinary salutation, I said, 'And how is your excellent father?' by which I meant to imply that I had ho! ho! ho! ho! that I had ho! ho! ho! ho! mistaken him for his own son ho! ho! ho! ho!"

He never succeeded rightly in the West End, though he was selected to play at Drury Lane before some foreign potentate as the typical English tragedian. With the dispersion of his company the old style of acting vanished from the stage. He was probably the last actor who rested on the Shakesperean tradition, and gave us the play as it had been handed down from generation to generation. He would not have astonished Charles Lamb, as some of our modern tragedians with their naturalism certainly would.

Whatever he might play on other nights, he al-

ways played the bard on Saturdays and Mondays, so that anyone going on those nights might go in confidence that he would certainly know the author, and might even guess the play without looking in the paper. After I became a medical student I occasionally allowed myself a night off, and went with unabated enjoyment.

I fancy Sadler's Wells is now demolished, but I doubt if there is any public memorial of the man who so finely accomplished this great task.

In that part of the Strand which lies between St. Mary-le-Strand and St. Clement Danes there was a squalid little thoroughfare called Wych Street, wherein was situated a grubby little theatre called the Olympic. For a time this was one of the most popular playhouses in London, owing to the most remarkable performances of an actor named Robson. He was a little man, with a pointed nose and bird-like expression, and a curious slit in the middle of his lower lip. His limbs were very small, but well proportioned and shapely. He was nothing of a dwarf, but undeniably grotesque, and therefore could not assume romantic parts. He was of all the actors of his time the one most undeniably possessed of genius. He could vary from the representation of homely pathos to broad farce, like Mr. Toole, but had in addition very short flashes

of tragic emotion that no other English actor has possessed in our time. He could hold the audience in the hollow of his hand. I mentioned this once to Irving, and he said that Robson possessed the rare gift of what he called " the electric thrill." It was always of short duration in any actor ; Kean had it for a minute and a half, Robson only for thirty seconds, and when it was over, an actor either had to leave the stage, or to turn abruptly to some other stage business, or suffer an anti-climax. Kean, of course, I never saw, but Robson would in a few short moments reduce his audience to tears, and then suddenly throw them into laughter.

His greatest tragic success was in *Daddy Hard-acre*, an adaptation from Molière's *L'Avare*. There was one scene where he descends to the cellar to look at his money, finds he has been robbed, suspects his daughter, rushes at her storming, drags her about the stage by her hair. So terrible was this scene that the audience almost rose at him, yet this same man in the concluding farce could dance about on the stage, and provoke the whole house to laughter by his fooling. He had also something of the same effect on the actors on the stage. As he by no means confined himself to the text, there were often some curious whimsicalities introduced, and as they were unexpected by the other

LANDSCAPE

Water-colour circa 1885. Reduced from 11 in. × 7 in.

actors, upset the progress of the play. He exercised a particular magnetic effect on Miss Herbert, an excellent actress, and I have seen him literally drive her into hysterics by his oddities.

When Charles Kean left the Princess' the Shakesperean repertory was continued by Fechter. He was a man of mixed nationalities, but more a Frenchman than anything else, and had a good reputation as a romantic actor in Paris. Greatly daring, he took the Princess' in order to play *Hamlet* in English. Remember that the tradition of fine Shakesperean acting was not forgotten, though it had nearly died out, and you can easily imagine the incredulity and derision that his proposal excited. As a matter of fact he could only speak English imperfectly, with slips in accent and intonation, but he was a thoroughly trained actor, and could deliver lines in any language he chose. He was coached in the play by the Rev. J. C. M. Bellew, the best declamatory reader of his time.

Fechter conquered by sheer charm; on the stage his presence was beautiful, every action grace. He discarded the gloomy tradition of the old-fashioned Hamlets, and he played the Dane, as he naturally ought to be, a fair man. Off the stage, he was by no means so impressive.

His blank verse in one or two places left some-

thing to be desired, for, after all, a man's accent will creep out. But apart from slight defects his delivery of the great soliloquies, his conversations and badinage, and his fencing have never been equalled for romantic beauty. Hardened old play-goers were utterly dumbfounded. Their most cherished traditions were upset, but they were conquered; the old box-keeper was reported to have said, "I have seen a many Hamlets, and all of them different; I have seen Mr. Kean, he made it tragedy, but Mr. Fechter he has raised it to Melodrama."

Fechter afterwards tried *Othello*, but failed. He moved into the Lyceum, where he had a long series of triumphs in the romantic drama. Associated with him was Miss Kate Terry, and when we take into account the disadvantage on the stage of being only a man, it is a wonderful testimony to his force and grace and charm, that she, the most charming member of a charming family, only divided and did not monopolise the attention of the house. They were equally matched in physical perfections, and in subtlety and delicacy in the expression of the ideal side of love. I remember one scene, though I have forgotten the play; Fechter the hero was deeply in love with Miss Terry, the heroine, but was uncertain of her feelings towards him. In the course

of a conversational scene he placed her with her back towards the audience, so that we did not see her face, but we saw his; he was watching her intently, and we saw by his expression how he read her mind—uncertainty, fear, hope, a gleam of happiness, questioning of the truth, joy, rapturous ecstasy as he threw up his arms and said, "Blanche, you love me, good gracious!" with a strong foreign accent on the gracious! How poor the words, but they were the dramatist, it was the actor who transformed them with an expression of pure emotion.

Fechter was a great friend of Dickens, who was his firm supporter, and as the office of *All the Year Round* was nearly opposite the Lyceum, it is needless to say that Dickens was constantly in the theatre, and his opinion of the two may be gathered from the following extract from a letter to Macready, which I have happened on since the above lines were written. I do not know if it refers to the same play, but the general truth is the same.

"Office of 'All the Year Round,'
"*February 19th*, 1863.

"Fechter doing wonders over the way here with a picturesque French drama. Miss Kate Terry, in a small part in it, perfectly charming. You may remember her making a noise, years ago, doing a

boy at an inn, in *The Courier of Lyons*. She has a tender love scene in this piece, which is a really beautiful and artistic thing. I saw her do it at about three in the morning of the day when the theatre opened, surrounded by shavings and carpenters, and (of course) with that inevitable hammer going; and I told Fechter: 'That is the very best piece of womanly tenderness I have ever seen on the stage, and you'll find that no audience can miss it.' It is a comfort to add that it was instantly seized upon, and is much talked of."

I never remember my father going to Sadler's Wells. He spoke of Phelps as a small Macready, and the theatre was on the opposite side of London, and not very accessible from where we lived. He required no persuasion to go to Fechter, and he delighted in Robson. We were occasionally taken to the Haymarket to see the old comedies, such as *The School for Scandal*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and some others. Altogether we went to the theatre some four or five times a year, which was very frisky for early Victorians.

Of course these were not the only theatres. There were others which did not happen to concern us, but there were two deserving of mention on the Surrey side of the water, close to Westminster Bridge,

one called simply the "Surrey Theatre." Readers of Lamb will remember that he describes it as the last refuge in the downward progress of the great Elliston, who even here did not lose his grand manner. "'Quite an opera pit,' he said to me (Lamb) as he was courteously conducting me over the benches of his Surrey Theatre, the last retreat and recess of his everyday waning grandeur."

Probably here for a time the legitimate drama found a home on this side of the Thames, whereon in bygone times it had flourished. But the days of Victoria were not those of Elizabeth, and despite the "opera pit," the theatre became celebrated for melodrama.

One play indeed forecasted the long runs of the present day, *Black-Eyed Susan*, by Douglas Jerrold. In this the hero William was played with immense dash and vigour by Mr. T. P. Cooke, affectionately known as "Tippy." The play was full of tears, nautical expressions, shivers, frights, scenes of violence, scenes of sentiment, court-martials, sentence of death, respite and a happy ending, but the great feature, although merely an episode, was the vigorous hornpipe which William danced in his few spare moments. It was one of those popular successes which united the suffrages of all classes. Douglas Jerrold's brains and "Tippy" Cooke's legs,

with the smell of salt water, captured the British nation.

Thackeray assumes him to be familiar to all, and uses his name as an aid to a description thus, by the mouth of Pleeceman X :

> "Vich he was a British sailor,
> For to judge him by his look,
> Tarry jacket, canvas trousers,
> Ha—la, Mr. T. P. Cook."

Years afterwards, when joints had stiffened and hornpipes were impossible, and "Tippy" had retired, some friends called upon him in his retreat in Torrington Square. He and his wife were seated, after the manner of old people, in comfortable armchairs, one on each side of the fire. After a little conversation about old times and things in general, somebody asked "If he ever played now?" He said "No!" Mrs. Cooke said he was offered an engagement lately, but he would not take it—"they wanted him to play an *old* man's part. But bless you, Tippy couldn't play an old man's part, no! He could not play an *old* man's part!"

Astley's was the theatre for children. It was a theatre and a circus. The arena occupied a great proportion of the pit, and was connected with the stage by sloping boards. The dramas were peculiar, and afforded frequent opportunities for horseman-

ship. Mazeppa was a favourite; he was bound on the wild horse in the arena, rushed up the slope on to the stage, was seen ascending the mountains by a zigzag course. Turpin also galloped round the ring, leaped five-barred gates, was pursued, but never caught. There were all the ordinary features of a circus—ladies in short skirts, the bold gentleman in tights who rode four horses abreast, clowns, ring-master, and so forth. But, after all, the delightful feature was the great number of children always to be seen amongst the audience.

Speaking generally, the theatres were very uncomfortable. The entrances were mostly bad, and there was a crush at the pay-place as the first rush was made for the pit. The custom of standing in a queue was not adopted till many years after. We should now consider the lighting poor, but as gas was a new invention, it was then considered brilliant. Even as late as 1812 Drury Lane would seem to have been lighted by candles, as the poet in the *Rejected Addresses* sings—

> "'Tis sweet to view from half-past five to six,
> Our long wax candles with short cotton wicks,
> Touched by the lamplighter's Promethean art,
> Start into light, and make the lighter start."

Scenery was very poor, and changed in full view of the audience by carpenters, who did not even

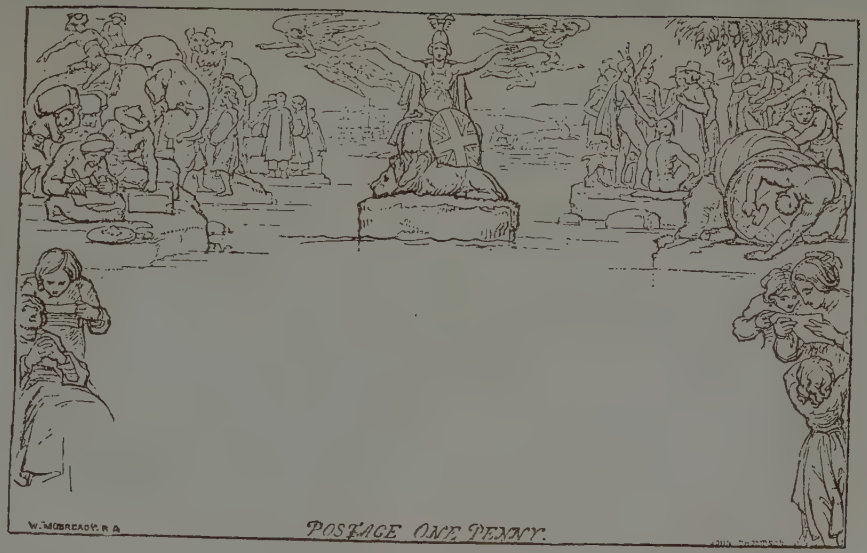
take the trouble to hide themselves. In some theatres a bit of the stage was in front of the curtain flanked on each side by the stage boxes. In the intervals between the acts, women pushed their way along the benches of the pit crying ginger-beer, lemonade, apples and oranges. The performance began about seven, and after nine o'clock admission was half price. The ordinary arrangement was to play a serious piece, preferably in five acts, and when the spirits of the audience were thoroughly depressed, a rattling farce was put on to raise them again. There were no problem plays, everybody having a firm conviction—which no amount of talking would have altered—that he ought to live with his own wife. The acting of the principal performers was fully as good as anything in the present day, though the supers were all badly dressed and badly drilled, and as the actors received but little assistance from their scenery or costume, they had to play so as to rivet the attention of the audience steadily throughout the play, and could not afford to relax their efforts during the display of a scenic dawn or sunset. On special occasions Royalty attended in state in certain theatres, where there was a Royal Box specially fenced off from the vulgar. Of course this was all stopped at the death of the Prince Consort.

Incidentally above, I have mentioned Mr. Rowland Hill, whom I occasionally saw when I was at his brother's school. Curiously enough he comes into connection with my father through the medium of his great practical reform. I am not sufficiently informed to be able to state what provisions, if any, formerly existed for the prepayment of letters, but the postage in a great number of cases was certainly defrayed by the recipient and not by the writer. But there existed a very curious custom by which certain great personages, including Members of Parliament, could send their correspondence through the post by the simple act of writing their signature on the outside of the letters. Such signatures were called franks, and were in great demand. Anyone having a friend in the House could get a number of letters "franked" in advance, and embark in a correspondence at the expense of the State. When Rowland Hill instituted his reform the privilege was abolished, but in order to continue the custom of indicating that a letter was free to pass through the post, it was determined to have a decoration printed on the envelope as a token of value received.

Artists were invited to send in designs, and one by Mulready was selected. It was allegorical and symbolical, and more than sufficient as a receipt for

a penny, but it left very little room for the address. The opportunity for burlesque was too good to be missed, and Leech and Browne produced parodies which were as good as the original, but though effective as designs, were not recognisd by the authorities as valid cash. The three envelopes were shown at the Liverpool Exhibition of H. K. Browne's works by Dr. John Newton.

Leech as usual was funny, but made no attempt to reproduce the decorative feeling of the original, while with Phiz the feeling for the pattern predominates, though on a close examination the satirical intention is easily descried. The originals are now very difficult to meet with. Trifling in themselves, they mark a point in the progress of a great social change.



THE MULREADY ENVELOPE.

THE PHIZ PARODY OF THE MULREADY ENVELOPE.

CHAPTER VIII

AMUSEMENTS OF THE POOR

THERE was very little abject poverty in Croydon. There always seemed to be an odd job for anyone who was on the look-out for one; machinery scarcely existed except in connection with the railway; but the community maintained an immense number of animals—horses, cows, pigs, sheep, poultry—which required constant supervision and unrelaxing care in feeding. At certain seasons at the farms there was a great demand for extra labour, and mobs of people, haymakers, 'oppers, and the like, descended from distant parts on to the fields, and departed like flights of birds no one knew whither. It may be supposed that life was intolerably dull and there were no amusements, but the people found means of enjoying themselves at various stated seasons by the observance of customary ceremonies.

About Christmas time the Waits perambulated the neighbourhood, and played from dusk till some time after midnight. They were supposed to afford a very pleasant entertainment if the household were

sitting up, and it was not etiquette to be ruffled, even if the trombone was a little blatant and one had been in the enjoyment of a beauty sleep. The only chance of mishap lay in the fact that hot drinks were offered and accepted, and occasionally in consequence the music became confused and discordant. Then there were carols sung by the younger people, generally of the poorer sort, but sometimes by those who were well off for a joke.

The mummers, too, performed according to ancient tradition at various seasons. They consisted of young people, who were dressed in home-made fancy costumes, of divers shapes and colours, but invariably decorated by strips of paper, like those used for making the tail of a kite, sewn on to garments to imitate streamers. Each performer in his turn would step forward from his ranks into the range of a light from a lanthorn held by a comrade. He would announce his name and qualities in doggerel before joining in the dialogue. I believe the plays were very old and traditional, and the performers did not at all understand the meaning of what they were doing.

Good Friday was especially reserved for pedestrianism, and walking and running races in considerable number were run off in different districts. There was not much professionalism, but there

were a great number of spectators, and voluntary subscription took the place of gate-money.

On May-day there was a good deal of fun going in the early part of the day. There were processions of "Jack in the Green," a kind of walking arbour with an opening in the leaves just sufficiently large for the bearer to see where he was going, accompanied by a troop of men dressed as sweeps, and girls in short petticoats as shepherdesses, many carrying ladles to collect coppers. There were also certain clowns who were masked, and had full license to play tricks on the audience. In the afternoon there was climbing a greasy pole for a leg of mutton and various sports, including, if my memory serves, a race for ladies, who ran in a garment which had not then lost its English name.

Living in a beautiful country, during the summer we scarcely needed entertainments, but on November the fifth there was the tremendous festival of Guy Fawkes. In those days Guys really were guys. They were built up, by earnest labour, of old clothes, or appropriate costumes made for the purpose, with masks, and, speaking generally, they presented the appearance of human beings paralytic from drink —or was it remorse for unrepented and unsuccessful crimes? They were seated in chairs, or borne in litters round the town, and after dark they were

ignominiously burnt in bonfires, to the accompaniment of fireworks. The anniversary was considered by many good judges to be the brightest in the year.

The veritable Guy Fawkes was forgotten except in name, and any unpopular persons served as foundation for the effigy. I remember at one time the Pope was very unpopular, and he was represented, not only as ruling in the East and West, but in sufficient numbers to have boxed the whole compass. But no matter who might be the actual person whose effigy paraded the streets, he was accompanied by a traditional refrain, sung fortissimo, by a thousand throats, and if the festival were not so distinctly Protestant, I should say to a Gregorian chant.

> "Remember, remember, the fifth of November,
> Gunpowder treason and plot,
> I see no reason why gunpowder treason
> Should ever be forgot,"

followed by inarticulate shouting, beating of frying-pans, drums, blowing of horns, and an altogether mingled uproar calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the boldest conspirator.

Many families had private Guys. Ours never left the premises, but for weeks caused us great anxiety lest his inflammability should suffer from

rain. We swept the garden clean of fallen leaves, and pilfered stray bits of wood. We amassed kitchen grease, and begged turpentine, collected all the band-boxes we could find, and piled them up into an immense heap in the kitchen garden. An old suit of clothes, with a shocking bad hat, and a mask which we painted ourselves in colours which would have astonished Rubens, was suspended from the stake, and was duly burnt. We generally had a good supply of fireworks, which were let off with the aid of the Governor and the groom. On one occasion, by dint of economies, we had purchased a rocket of surpassing splendour, which happened to be sold us separate from its necessary stick. The Governor and his assistant tied on the rocket, stuck the stick into the potato field, and applied the fuse. But they had placed the rocket upside down, and when it was fired, it seemed to utter a shriek, belched forth fire, broke the stick, and ran about the garden, pursuing us in all directions like a fiery fiend endowed with supernatural vitality.

But the real great festival was the Croydon Walnut Fair, held the first week in October, on a large piece of ground which was called from its occupation Fairfield. Fairs were very useful and amusing to country people before railways made communica-

tion between distant parts easy. There was a good deal of *bona fide* business transacted, but the main object was amusement.

There were enormous quantities of walnuts for sale, in sacks, baskets, and boxes. There was gingerbread with the gilt on, and gingerbread with the gilt off. There were targets of various kinds, and cocoa-nuts, three shies a penny, Aunt Sallys, swings, merry-go-rounds, and other delights, from fat ladies, learned pigs, wrestlers, single-stick players, soothsayers, to vanishing ladies, giants, dwarfs, and American Indians born and bred in Southwark, all to be seen for the modest sum of a penny a piece. In a sort of central square were situated the aristocratic entertainments. There was Richardson's show, which continued the Elizabethan tradition in having an open-air stage outside, besides a modern stage with curtain and footlights in the interior. Performances took place free gratis on the outside to whet the appetite. The whole company, magnificently dressed for a bloody and dismal tragedy, gaily danced quadrilles. Then after much beating of the gong and shouting, everybody disappeared into the interior, leaving such an aching void by their absence, that a rush of the public at 6*d.* a head would take place to witness the performance.

Then there was a circus, which was like every other circus which has existed before or since. The same remarkable spotted horses with pink noses, spangled ladies, paper hoops to jump through, trained horses who dined with the clown, educated ponies who appealed to the feminine hearts, tumblers and acrobats, jugglers and performing dogs. These things have expanded and become more splendid, and edged their way into permanent hippodromes, but have not altered in their nature from that day to this.

There were the waxworks, either Mrs. Jarley's or some opponent's, containing models of the celebrities of both hemispheres and a small supplementary tent called the chamber of horrors, on account of containing the portraits of sundry brutal but popular murderers, who all had very nice pink complexions and neatly dressed hair, as if homicide were a healthy and refining occupation. Then there was Wombwell's menagerie, with a most gorgeous oriental façade, decorated with pictures of wild animals jumping about in a state of extreme liveliness. Inside, the unfortunate beasts were confined in cages far too small for them ; the whole place was very dismal and smelly. The great attraction was the feeding of the animals and the occasional performance of the lion-tamer, who might be a lady.

Interspersed were refreshment booths, where very solid meals could be procured, and were largely patronised; the special dish for the season was roast goose, which was eaten in enormous quantities. And to wind up, there were large booths which provided spacious floors and bands for dancing. We were ourselves forcibly removed from the fair at an early hour in the evening, but were given to understand that the dancing was kept up nearly all night. Though our stay was tyrannously curtailed, we were promised that when we were grown up we might dance till breakfast time. We were taken to the fair by the maid-servants in the afternoon, and by the groom in the evening.

At the time we are describing there were many large and important fairs held all over the country, but for some reasons they have almost ceased to exist. A few shows and circuses may still be met with in the outskirts of towns; swings and merry-go-rounds spring up mysteriously in vacant spaces, and as mysteriously vanish. Some of this kind are engaged for school feasts and club walks, and at the coronation of our present King the Corporation of Liverpool held a fair in Sefton Park, which was greatly enjoyed by everybody except by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. I myself in

cycling about the country have become acquainted by sight with an enterprising person who drives a large yellow van, on which he announces that he attends "Feets and Gales on the shortest notice."

CHAPTER IX

ENTERTAINMENTS, READINGS, AND EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

In the early Victorian days a great number of people had strong scruples against entering a theatre. They entertained an inherited prejudice, which they did not care to disturb by an investigation of the actual facts, but they were not destitute of the natural appetite and love of the intellectual enjoyment afforded by dramatic performances, and would eagerly go to any place which gave them the same kind of thing without the objectionable name, so that when the nation began to recover from the effects of the great war, and money became more plentiful, and facilities of travel increased, the country cousin with his women-folk came to London for their amusements, and found entertainers ready with open doors to welcome them.

One of the most popular of these was Mr. Albert Smith's account of his ascent of Mont Blanc. He had begun life as a dentist, but he had literary and theatrical tastes, had written some amusing books in imitation, at a very respectful distance, of *Boz*,

and illustrated by Phiz. He connected himself with the theatre by marrying Miss Keeley, the daughter of two of the most popular comedians of the day. Furnished with a beautifully painted diorama and aided by a piano, he gave an account of his journey to Switzerland, and his ascent of Mont Blanc, which had not then become a pleasure trip. The entertainment of its kind was delightful, and in many ways original. At the end of the hall, in the position usually occupied by a proscenium, was an exact imitation of the front of a Swiss châlet, with a foreground of rock and trickling water. On the left hand was a bower of vegetation, which partially concealed the lecturer, and wholly hid the piano from view. A huge St. Bernard dog walked about among the audience, and was petted by the ladies in the stalls.

The lecturer himself appeared exactly as the clock was striking. He began with his start from London, gave an account of the people he had met on his journey, the things and places he had seen, with correct imitation of the way his fellow-travellers had spoken, eaten, drank, and smoked. As the English in those days considered themselves superior to foreigners, and knew nothing about them, the story of their ways was considered capital fun. Meanwhile a portion of the châlet front opened and exposed the diorama, which was moved

slowly along, giving a continuous view, as if the country were seen from a steamer or a train. As travel was not so common, cheap, or comfortable as it is now, these views of places with Mr. Albert Smith's light and airy description were found very interesting. He interspersed his lecture with anecdotes, and, like Mr. Silas Wegg, occasionally dropped into verse and song, accompanying himself on the piano, and wound up with a long patter on the topics of the day, supposed to represent the contents of *Galignani's Messenger*, at that time the only English paper published in Paris. I am bound to say, I do not think anything so good of its kind exists to-day; it was far superior and better for the eyes than the cinematograph.

Mr. and Mrs. German Reed ventured very nearly into the danger-zone. They had a regular stage on a very small scale but exactly like the real thing, with footlights, a curtain, and costumes. They performed little plays, and above all, Mrs. German Reed had once been a popular actress under the name of Miss Priscilla Horton. They were assisted by Mr. John Parry, and subsequently by Mr. Corney Grain, as "entertainers," a name invented since their time, but signifying one who could play tricks on the piano and talk to the audience at the same time.

A FAIR EQUESTRIAN.

Water-colour circa 1850. Reduced from 29 in. × 24 in.

Both of them certainly were entertaining. And for those who thought a little clerical protection agreeable, the Rev. J. C. M. Bellew began to give readings of a dramatic type in prose and poetry. He was one of Hablot Browne's few clerical acquaintances. At a later date he gave up his orders and became a Roman Catholic, and adopted recitation as his profession. When I first knew him he was incumbent of a fashionable church in St. John's Wood. He was a handsome man, good features, and a fine mane of grey hair. He had his surplice cut with a kind of bulge, which suggested an embryonic state of an episcopal lawn sleeve. The sermon was an oration carefully prepared and carefully read, or rather declaimed, and any lack of thought was entirely concealed by a sonorous rhetoric. The last time I heard him was in St. George's Hall in Liverpool, where he recited several pieces to the accompaniment of the great organ, no easy task, but most successfully accomplished, apparently without any strain on the voice. His comic readings were not above the average, and he had neither a natural gift for humour, nor was his method adapted to comedy. But in declamation he was unsurpassed, and has had no successor.

Miss Fanny Kemble, the youngest member of a distinguished theatrical family, gave readings from

Shakespere. She read with enormous spirit and go, and, as I thought, with an exaggerated display of facial expression, but I was very young when I attended her recitals in the little theatre at Croydon, and the fault may have arisen from the smallness of the auditorium rendering her actions too big for the size of the palce. There is a great difference needed between the acting adapted for a large and small theatre, which she did not sufficiently regard. Anyway she made the meaning of the author clear.

Then there was Mr. Woodin, who was, what is now called, a "quick-change artist," and imitated imaginary characters and celebrities as half-length portraits. He occupied a whole evening all by himself, popping down behind a kind of draped toilette table as Mr. Woodin, and reappearing as a rosy farmer from the Midlands, or the Emperor of the French, a young lady in full dress, and other equally surprising variations from his own normal personality. Many of his kind exist, and give turns more or less similar at the music halls. He had no assistant.

I have no doubt there were others that I did not happen to know about. These were examples that showed that a man could for an hour or two hold the attention of an audience and carry out an entertainment at a very small expense, and with

less exertion than is involved in playing a long part in a regular drama.

Dickens had more than an ordinary hankering for the stage; he had a passion for the footlights; he also had a strongly ingrained desire to make large sums of money quickly. Profuse himself, he desired profuseness on the part of the public. He wanted their money, and he wanted that immediate applause which rewards the actor; to him the audience gives twice, for it gives quickly; to the author it may give as much, but it gives slowly, and the plaudits do not ring in the ears immediately as the reward for effort. From the examples around him he saw his way to indulge his propensities at an expense that, compared with engaging a theatre, was trivial. He needed no company, and his rental would be small. There would be no risk. I heard him in St. Martin's Hall, a dismal place in Long Acre. There was no bustle, light, or brilliancy. We might have been attending a political meeting. The platform was converted into a small stage, such as might serve for amateur actors, by means of a little proscenium, which reflected top and side lights on to the reader, and kept the audience in a gloomy twilight.

Dickens himself came on the platform unaccompanied, and appeared a smaller man than he

did under ordinary circumstances. He was very carefully dressed and made up for the occasion, and rather looked like a waxwork of himself, with the habitual fire and spirit smoothed out of his face. I felt—and I am not sure but what the rest of the audience also felt, and I feel more strongly now—that we did not want Dickens there; he was beneath his right position—somebody else could have served the purpose of reading his works. Therefore there was a feeling that we were not there purely for the intellectual pleasure of hearing the reading, but partly to satisfy our curiosity with regard to the personality of the man. It was always "Mr. Dickens and how he was doing it" that preoccupied us. Also his elaborate and conventional costume was a mistake. Like other men of a strong character, he did not look his best in evening dress, and it is quite unadaptable to various circumstances incident to the representation of tragic or comic actions on the part of different characters. It has a definite association with occupations of the most decorous and respectable character. When a man puts on his dress clothes, he announces that he is going to behave as conventionally as possible.

He would have done better if he had appeared in something like his ordinary costume, a dark blue loosely cut suit, which gave him rather the air of a

sea-captain in mufti. It would have been perfectly neutral, and even if it took some of the conventional among the audience by surprise at first, it would have aided him in directing attention to his characters, instead of diverting it. It was impossible not to be reminded of balls and parties, or the opera, when the eye was caught by the flashing of diamond studs in an expanse of white shirt. It may have been but for a moment, but it certainly prevented the necessary concentration on Bill Sikes or Mrs. Gamp. A reader must above everything be neutral, and jar as little as possible with the characters he is portraying; if he does not, then the acting must be subdued and gesture restrained, so that the assumed character is presented to the audience rather in narrative form than in actual embodiment.

Taking the reading on its own merits, and putting aside the personality of the author, the performances were on the whole disappointing, clever though they were. Curiously, he made less of the comic characters and more of the serious than would have been expected.

His most conspicuous failure was Sam Weller in the trial from *Pickwick*, which as a piece is almost perfect as a reading. Sam Weller, "the immortal Sam," fell positively flat. His great success, greatest because imbued with passion and

conviction, was the murder of Nancy. Here he threw the book away, gave himself up wholly to the enactment of the horrible scene. It must be remembered it is one of the finest bits of writing in his works, and produces a great effect if it is simply read by a moderately good reader, without any attempt at acting at all.

In London the readings were very well attended, but in the provinces they roused people to enthusiasm, and he was received with the popular applause which the early Victorians usually reserved for a *prima donna* of surpassing excellence. He was of course a friend of the people, and they came forth in their thousands to see him. In America these readings created a furore. They filled his pockets with money, and wore him out.

The book he read from was specially arranged as to matter, and seemed to me to have great black marks and indications to attract and guide his eye, and always enable him to catch his place when he changed, as he frequently did, from reciting to reading. Of course the man of genius shone through every difficulty, but I doubt whether elaborate acting can ever be wholly successful in a narrative that is read from a book, and several parts played by one man. What he did was as well done as it could be, but it was not worth the doing.

SIC TRANSIT.

Design in pencil and white on grey paper. Reduced from 9¾ in. × 4¾ in.

CHAPTER X

MUSIC—WHOLESALE AMATEUR SONGSTERS

INTEREST in music among the middle classes in my early days was not wide, nor was it very sincere. Well-trained amateur musicians such as abound in the present day in rivalry with the pianola and gramophone did not then exist. Teaching was not in great demand, and being esteemed a luxury, and savouring of ostentation, was expensive, besides being slow and second rate. It was mostly in the nature of private tuition, and though there were a few choral societies, the audiences were shy and sparse, so that their warblings could scarcely be described as public.

But a man arose who exercised a profound effect in arousing a taste which did exist, though only in a dormant condition.

Mr. John Hullah took Exeter Hall, an immense building, and therein taught enormous classes to sing part-songs and other choral music. He became very popular, and if everybody did not join his classes, they pretended to know all about them.

Tom Hood celebrated him in a poem, of which the subjoined lines form the opening :

"MORE HULLAH-BALOO"

Amongst the great inventions of this age,
Which ev'ry other century surpasses,
Is one,—just now the rage—
Call'd 'Singing for all Classes—'
That is, for all the British millions,
And billions,
And quadrillions,
Not to name Quintilians,
That now, alas! have no more ear than asses,
To learn to warble like the birds in June,
In time and tune,
Correct as clocks, and musical as glasses!"

John Hullah was a genuine early Victorian, full of confidence, pluck, and resource. He undertook his enormous classes at a time when failure seemed inevitable, and scored a success. He was an enthusiast. He considered that a naturally bad ear was a natural curiosity, and though there were many people who appeared destitute of any appreciation of musical sounds, it was more by reason of want of familiarity or teaching than a natural deficiency. With all his vast experience he said that he had only met with two individuals upon whom he could make no impression. One was a person of no importance ; the other was a High Church clergyman, who desired

to learn sufficient music to enable him to intone the service. Everything failed. Nothing could teach him to hear the difference between two notes of music, much less utter them. His invincible ignorance, however, in one department did not extend to other branches, for he became a Dean and a celebrity, not only on account of his pulpit eloquence and organising powers, but for the value of his biographical works.

Mr. Hullah's son, my fellow-student at St. Thomas', posed as model to Mr. Holman Hunt for the young man who is seated on the box seat of an omnibus in the picture of London on the night of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII. The reader will remember that the picture is a representation under a strong gas-light illumination, and deals therefore with the general effect of objects and figures, thereby partially revealed without that over modelling and insistence upon unimportant details which constitute a defect in many of Mr. Holman Hunt's pictures.

Mr. Hullah was a friend of Dickens, who wrote for him the words of an operetta called *The Village Coquettes*. It was produced at the St. James' Theatre in 1836, with scenery painted from sketches by Browne.

I find a reference to this in a letter from Dickens to Mr. Horne :—

"Pray tell that besotted —— to let the opera sink into its native obscurity. I did it in a fit of d——ble good nature long ago for Hullah, who wrote some very pretty music to it. I just put down for everybody what everybody at the St. James' Theatre wanted to say and do, and that they could say and do best, and I have been most sincerely repentant ever since. The farce I also did as a sort of practical joke for Harley, whom I have known a long time. It was funny—adapted from one of the published sketches called the *Great Winglebury Duel*, and was published by Chapman & Hall. But I have no copy of it now, nor should I think they have. But both these things were done without the least consideration or regard to reputation."

Compared with the present day, the early Victorians were short of music. True, during the season, the opera was even more splendid than it is at present. For years in succession the two great houses of Her Majesty's and Covent Garden had a succession of great performers singing in a rivalry which was not so much friendly as strenuous, and there were of course the classical performances at the old established societies, but these were expensive and not for the people.

The first successful attempt to provide good music for the masses was made by Mr. Augustus

Manns at the Crystal Palace. He was for a time not considered as a musician of high rank, but regarded much as a conductor of a seaside band. He was a curious-looking man, wore a costume something between that of a colonel and the hall porter of a modern hotel, and wore very long hair to betoken his occupation. By degrees he found himself surrounded in the afternoon by a small but attentive audience, which gradually increased until he worked himself into the position of a recognised authority and was taken seriously by competent judges. At the Crystal Palace we had vocal concerts of a very high quality on certain afternoons, and here we became acquainted with the leading singers of the time.

I remember upon one occasion, among others, we heard Piccolomini, who had taken the town by storm by her singing of florid Italian music and her vivacious acting. She was supposed to be a princess, and certainly bore the historic name. On this occasion she sang some Italian air from her repertoire, and then another, to the increasing delight of the audience, till in response to an irresistible encore she sang in broken English the well-known song by Balfe, " I Dreamt that I Dwelt in Marble Halls," and presently came to the part where she discovered that in the midst of all her splendours

she was most delighted to find "He loved her still the same." As she sang these words she cast her eyes sideways towards an imaginary lover with a languishing amorousness which went straight to the sentimental heart of the vast audience. But as the applause somewhat subsided I heard a lady in front of me say to her daughters in a loud tone, "The manners of that young person are far from pleasing."

One kind of entertainment which had survived from previous generations were the "gardens," and thither the early Victorian bourgeois did much resort. The majority of them were respectable, but some were reputed to become rowdy after eleven o'clock at night. On the whole they rather resembled, on a small scale, the gardens attached to our Exhibitions at Earl's Court. One of the most popular was on the Surrey side, not far from the Kennington Oval. It was a pleasant enough garden, containing a number of houses and cages for the accommodation of wild beasts, from elephants to white rats, and was called the Surrey Zoological Gardens. So far it was a humble imitation of the grounds in Regent's Park, but it differed from them, as it gave during the afternoon and evening a series of entertainments. There was an orchestra and platform for the delight of dancers, and concerts used to be given in a huge

hall holding some thousands. This building was subsequently converted into St. Thomas' Hospital, while the present structure was being built opposite the Houses of Parliament. One side of the garden was bounded by a shallow lake, and on the far side was erected a scene representing a town which might be besieged, or a volcano which might suffer an eruption. It excited admiration as a landscape during daylight, and after dark served for a lavish display of fireworks. In the early part of the afternoon on certain occasions we were gratified by a balloon ascent, and the subsequent descent by a hardy person in a parachute. The balloon gave delight not only to the visitors in the garden who had paid, but to several square miles of street population who had not, who ran shouting "Balloon! balloon!" and often succeeded in getting within four or five miles of the spot where it descended.

In the course of the evening a concert was given in the hall by Julien, who was the great provider of popular music. He was undoubtedly a clever man, a Frenchman, a *poseur*, partly a charlatan—sufficiently so to render him attractive and impressive to the public—and partly a serious musician, though he was too prone by nature to lay an undue stress on effect. He had all sorts of odd ways of attracting public attention

by means of queer instruments and previously unknown noises. At one time he produced an immense drum, which was hung at the top of the orchestra at the back, where it looked like the father of all drums surrounded by its family. It required two men to play it, and we watched with great interest how each drummer had to look sideways along the barrel of the drum to see how his colleague was getting on at the other end, and time his own thwacks accordingly. But in spite of these oddities Julien was a protagonist in the arena of modern music. He was undoubtedly if not the first, at least one of the pioneers of programme-music, and not a slave to melody. All sorts of sounds were fish for his musical net. As the symphony was rather beyond the liking of the popular audience, his tone poems were frequently cast in the forms of quadrilles or dances. I remember one which was of a military nature, and something after the following fashion :—

We bowed to partners, crossed over and backed again to the distant step of a large army approaching us, the footsteps growing louder and louder as they came nearer. Then we did the ladies' chain, to the drums and fifes briskly playing " The Girls we left behind us," and then they came towards us and swept past, departing into silence, leaving noth-

ing but sobs behind them. Then came the combat, ushered in by a booming sound on the kettledrums, punctuated by low booms produced by the big drum. Then there came on an indescribable din, shrieks of the wounded, on the wood-wind. A staccato movement on the brass signifying a gallant charge of the Old Guard, and the time marked every three or four bars by the discharge of ordnance—real cannons! The foe fled before the trombones and the ordnance—the night seemed to close in to the distant melody of the evening hymn. I do not remember that the snores of the sleeping army were represented, but I should have mentioned that at one point the clock certainly struck midnight. Then, as day might be supposed to dawn, we might hear the church bells calling the villagers to church, cattle and goats and sheep all uttering their characteristic sounds in strict time to the music as they were driven to their pasture. Mingled with these pacific sounds from far, far away came the sound of a military band, which approached at the abnormal pace of people in a cinematograph, its tones growing louder and louder as it drew nearer the town, till at length the spirited air of the "British Grenadiers" flying about with the greatest impartiality from one set of instruments to another could plainly be distinguished.

This, as was only natural, would seem to have awakened the sleepers, and the hastily attired population poured into the streets to welcome the returning heroes with acclamation and the ringing of joy bells. Then the whole would conclude by the soldiers and inhabitants fraternising, and singing a hymn of thanksgiving with Methodistic fervour, punctuated from time to time with a tremendous roar augmented by the rattle of the side drums, and as we bowed to partners and offered arms, the music abruptly stopped, Julien would apparently lose the use of his legs, and like one stricken by a mortal weakness would sink back exhausted into a golden chair.

One never-to-be-forgotten night there was nearly a riot. The attraction was Alboni. The hall was not merely crowded, but the spectators were wedged in against one another like figs in a box. There were hundreds piled up against each doorway, and outside an angry and disappointed mob surrounded the building in loose order. There was also a number of people in the roads outside the grounds. Time after time did Julien attempt to begin a popular overture, but nothing could be heard but the tumultuous shouts of "Alboni." Those who were inside wanted their song at once, those who were jammed in the doors wanted to be released; at length Julien, after a hurried disappearance, came forward

without his baton and tried to address the mob. After an indescribable tumult between those who wanted to hear what he had to say and those who were too indignant to hear anything, he was heard to say, " Gentlemen, I have been to the directors, and "—pointing his fingers to his ears—" they have shooted their ears." The audience with the good-nature of an English mob roared with laughter, and Julien seizing the happy moment rushed to the artists' door and led on Alboni.

My father enjoyed these entertainments, for with the exception of a short space of time in the concert hall we were in the open air all the time. We drove there and back in an open chaise, and picnicked in the grounds.

CHAPTER XI

EARLY VICTORIAN ILLUSTRATIONS

THE methods of publishing were necessarily very different from those employed in the present day, and in the matter of mechanical reproduction inferior in the sense of economy, precision, and rapidity. Owing to the immense popularity of Dickens, my father's work became so universally known that he was besieged with clients. It must be kept in mind that his work belonged to his generation and exactly suited the taste of the time, so that without doubt he would have become a popular illustrator even if he had begun his career more quietly. But the excess of work certainly exercised a deleterious influence over his artistic development in other directions. His whole time was taken up with the attempt to keep pace with the demand, and leaving very little leisure for preparation, study, or even observation. The enormous success of *Pickwick* alone, its great publicity, gave him a reputation in a few months that could only have been acquired under ordinary circumstances in several years. At the time when he had attained little more than his

majority, he was the most popular illustrator in the kingdom. There was, of course, no author who could be put into competition with Dickens for a single moment, but there were writers of merit who had a certain amount of popularity for whom he did similar work. There was scarcely anybody who had produced an ill-developed bantling of a book but who was desirous of the aid of at least one drawing from his hand. The reader will therefore understand that he had very little leisure, and his simple tastes did not tempt him to neglect the work immediately under his hand for any form of recreation. Each author (or his publisher) naturally considered his own work of the greatest importance, so there was always somebody in a state of fuss urging haste—though experience constantly showed that the world could well afford to wait patiently for many of the productions. A short account of the work itself may not be out of place.

It may be noted that a certain proportion of these books were issued in monthly numbers, while others were published as complete volumes. The former category generally contained two steel engravings for each number, the others as many as the publisher thought would be necessary to attract buyers. Moreover, a number of less important drawings were executed as woodcuts. Both methods of repro-

duction have been superseded almost, if not entirely, by mechanical processes, in which photography and chemistry play an important part, and it may be advisable here to briefly explain the methods then in vogue.

Those who have studied the works with any care will have noticed the different qualities of the etchings and woodcuts. They might almost be the work of two different men. The woodcuts are invariably inferior to the etchings. The process of etching was as follows : The plate after being heated was dabbed over with a special quality of wax, which was blackened by exposure to the fuliginous flame of a taper. The coating of wax was very thin, and was required to be tenacious, but not brittle. The design showing in a rough way the main lines, and distribution of light and shade, was made in chalk, pencil, or in Indian ink on a thin paper. Browne generally used ordinary straw letter paper ; a sheet of tissue paper was rubbed with sanguine (red chalk) placed face downwards on the wax. On this was placed the design, which was firmly traced over by a blunt point. On removing the two sheets of paper the design could be seen more or less completely drawn in red on the dark surface of the wax. Then the etcher with a sharp-pointed needle would scratch the wax, very much as if draw-

THE ROCKERS.

ing with an ordinary lead pencil, so as to expose the metal surface beneath. He might or might not slightly scratch the surface of the plate, but to get the wax off was the one thing essential. It would then be noticed that the outlines and shading did not show as dark upon light, but as glittering shining lines, so that the design would appear light where it was intended to be dark, and vice versa. Over the surface so prepared was poured a mordant solution; in the case of Browne's steel plates it was diluted nitric acid. The whole plate would be exposed to the solution for a certain time; and when the background and parts that required to appear delicately etched were judged to be sufficiently bitten, they would be varnished so that the acid could not reach the metal, and the biting-in continued for some time longer over the darker parts. A skilful biter-in, such as Robert Young, could produce many degrees of gradation, but in such plates used in the ordinary illustrations not more than three or four distinctions are to be found, the backgrounds, faces, the costumes, and the foregrounds. It will be perceived that if an etcher and biter-in understood one another, the exact effect desired might be attained. The biting-in finished, the wax had to be cleared off the plate, which then appeared as a bright shining surface partly covered by scratches.

It passed now into the hands of the printer, who proceeded to dab it all over with printing ink, which was wiped off, first by means of a rag, and finally by the ball of his thumb. It will be perceived that the surface was again bright and shining, but that the grooves made by the needle and the acid were filled with the ink and appeared as black lines. The plate and a rather thick paper were then passed under a roller-press, not unlike the domestic mangle, and the drawing appeared for the first time in black and white. Considerable experience was required in carrying out the design, as the etcher never saw his work in its proper relations until after it had passed out of his hands. Modern etchings which are executed with a view to pictorial effects involve a rather more complicated technique, which however only differs in detail and not in principle. The steel etchings could not be printed at the same time as the letterpress, and either had to appear on separate paper, as they did in the Dickens' numbers, or if printed among the text, by two separate printings, as in the case of the beautiful Turner vignettes to Rogers' poems.

In the case of the Dickens books, with their enormous sale, the plate-printing being slower than the letterpress, one or two replicas were required, and were executed by Browne by hand. It is astonish-

ing how close the copies were, but minute differences can be detected on a careful examination. The utility of the preliminary tracings becomes obvious.

As a mechanical aid Browne possessed a ruling machine, which was capable of producing parallel lines very close together, or with an appreciable distance between them, so that any plate could be covered by a tint ranging from grey almost to black by being subjected to this machine. Whilst the wax was on it the shades could be drawn in the usual manner by the etching needle, and the lights stopped out with the varnish, before the application of the mordant. In this manner very good effects could be produced with little labour; the machine could be used by an assistant, and required no more skill than a barrel-organ. It was used with great effect in *Bleak House*, to be referred to hereafter. A steel plate required incessant care and attention from the beginning to the end of its existence. A variation in the skill or carefulness of the printer would affect the result to an extraordinary degree. When much call was made upon a plate it was apt to be worn away unevenly, and required repairing. Allowance being made for these defects, it was an excellent means of illustrating, and though not an absolute facsimile of the artist's handling, it was

to a great extent autographic. Modern processes of course are absolutely faithful facsimiles, even down to faults in drawing material or paper.

A wood block was usually made of box-wood, cut across the grain with a beautifully level and polished surface. On to this, after a preparation by means of a coating of Chinese white, the design was traced in sanguine, in the same way as the first stage of an etching, showing red on white. The drawing was completed in the usual manner with a very hard black lead pencil, and it was the business of the draughtsman to vary the blackness of his line by its thickness, and never by any variation of his pressure on the pencil. The business of an engraver was to cut away all the white, leaving the black lines or shading of the pencil standing up as little ridges, exactly similar to the little ridges which constitute the letters in ordinary type. Moreover, if required, an engraver could produce a tint in the same manner as with the ruling machine above mentioned by means of parallel lines. When the draughtsman's pencil line was exactly reproduced the work was called "facsimile," and resembled the design, with only the amount of variation which would normally exist between a drawing in pencil and another in pen and ink, that is to say, with a little added stiffness.

In the engraving in "tint" the engraver exercised his individual skill as to his tint, and could represent the effect of a drawing executed in Indian ink by a series of close parallel lines, and Chinese white by cutting away the whole surface. So that wood cutting was capable of considerable variety, ranging from the effects of a coarse line engraving to those of a monochrome drawing. As the ink was conveyed by the upstanding ridges, the block could be set up and printed with the letterpress, as it was for many years in the pages of the *Illustrated News* and *Punch*. The difference between the two processes was that every groove made by the etcher printed as black, whereas every groove made by the wood cutter printed as white.

Browne was an accomplished etcher, but he was never at home with the technique of wood cutting. He never seemed able to realise what changes an engraver might make in the appearance of his drawing. As a rule, the tendency was to increase the amount of white shown, and thereby thin the line, and also in a free kind of drawing to substitute something more mechanical. He never cured himself of using a mixed method of drawing and leaving the engraver to find his way out of it, which he generally did by cutting away anything that offered a difficulty. It may seem

strange that a man should not have an equal skill in the two methods, but it was often the case that when men had been practised in drawing upon wood, they found great difficulty in etching, that is to say, without expending more care and attention on the work than it was worth.

Leech drew much better on wood than he could etch, but he was not free from mischances at the hands of the cutter. When a friend praised one of his drawings on a block he said, "Wait till it comes back from the engraver." The freer the line and the more vivacious the handling, the greater the damage done in the cutting. The draughtsman who desired a good facsimile had to keep clearly before his mind the difficulties of the engraver, who had to reverse the whole process and work at the white, leaving the black as a sort of basis. The really successful draughtsmen on wood were men who had begun as wood cutters, like William Harvey or, at an earlier date, Thomas Bewick, and in their work the effect of the white playing over the black is never lost sight of.

I hope I have made it clear that the production of a plate was not altogether a simple process. The plates were steel, with beautiful polished surfaces on the front. The first process was the application of the wax. A number were done at a time by Young,

MOTHER AND CHILD.

Reduced from 11 *in.* × 8¾ *in.*

and sent to the Governor in a specially constructed box. When a plate was etched, it would be sent back to Young with the sketch. It would then be bitten. The lettering was done by an assistant. Any part where the acid had not satisfactorily taken was rectified by a touch from the engraver and the plate sent to the printer, who got as much work out of it as it would stand. By this division of labour Browne was able to etch a second plate while the first was being bitten in. Thus he was able to keep pace with the extraordinary demands made upon him. Robert Young, my father's friend and partner, attended to all these subsidiary processes. He came down to Croydon nearly every Sunday, and sometimes during the week. Consequently there was a continual consultation between the two men, and there was a frequent transmission by special messengers and carriers of the boxes that contained the plates.

CHAPTER XII

CHARLES LEVER, THE MAN AND HIS BOOKS

An author who occupied a great deal of Browne's attention as illustrator was Charles Lever. At any other time, and with any other competitor less powerful than Dickens, he would have been considered a very popular writer. Even with Dickens in the field before him, and the dazzling popularity of *Pickwick* to contend against, he achieved a remarkable success with his first book, and had not, like the majority of authors, to suffer from a number of preliminary failures. He and his publisher must have had plenty of confidence—or, as the moderns would put it, "cheek"—to start with a series of one shilling monthly numbers, with two illustrations etched by Phiz, at once an imitation and an assumption of equality with Dickens. The matter also discarded the old-fashioned romantic style, and followed *Pickwick's* lead in being broadly farcical. The audacity met with its reward. A year or two afterwards Thackeray, who for some time had been writing for magazines and *Punch*, tried his luck with *Vanity Fair* in shilling numbers and his own illustrations. Except for a

difference in colour, the appearance of the three books was very similar. Dickens' cover was a dull green, Lever's a bright pink, and Thackeray's a brimstone yellow—all, like shows at a fair, decorated with designs indicating what was to be seen within.

Lever belonged to that great Anglo-Irish race which has contributed so much to the wit, wisdom, and efficiency of our nation. He himself had a slightly contemptuous opinion of the average home-grown Englishman as wanting in dash and go. He thought of us as Charles Lamb thought of the Scotchman, but admitted that we could manage a joke if we were given time. He possessed the most extraordinary animal spirits, loved adventures, dangers, and practical jokes. Though really a temperate man, he was pre-eminently social, and enjoyed feasting and all kinds of jollity, for which in after years the bill was sent in, and had to be paid in the torments of gout. He was a good-looking man, with a typical Irish face, small eyes, a large powerful jaw, presenting no appearance of intellectuality when in repose, but easily lighting up, becoming genial and vivacious. His physique was correspondingly big, and he was remarkably active. The same type may still be seen by anyone who may happen to pass a few days in the neighbourhood of Trinity College, Dublin. He was a born con-

versationalist like many of his countrymen, and it required scarcely any provocation to make him talk to an almost unlimited extent; and there seemed no reason when he began, why he should ever leave off. There was a continual stream of wit, narrative, and quotation, all mingled, but forthcoming at call like the streams from a conjurer's miraculous bottle. His books were not literary efforts, but extracts from his habitual talk. Withal, he was modest, and never talked for display, but to amuse himself and friends in obedience to a natural instinct. He began life as a medical student, and his career probably resembled Mr. Bob Sawyer's, with perhaps a little added vivacity. When qualified he set up in practice in Ireland with a minimum of medical knowledge, but he had an abundance of common-sense and a taking manner, which go a long way in the making of a successful medical man. In the intervals of doctoring his genius for narration began to assert itself, and he scribbled sketches for the *Dublin University Magazine*, and in particular some chapters of a book, *Harry Lorrequer*, which gave him his fame and a sort of *nom de guerre*.

Considering his temperament, his marriage cannot be accepted as proof that he was successful in making an income, but marry he did, and very happily. Whether it was from the necessity of providing for

new responsibilities, or from mere love of change, which was inherent in his nature, he contrived to secure an appointment at Brussels. In that gay little city he took a fine house near the Embassy, and doctored all sorts of swells who were passing through to the curative waters of the Spas. But *Lorrequer* was not forgotten, and the beginning was reprinted from the *University Magazine*, and the publication in monthly numbers seriously begun. From the beginning he leant upon Phiz; he was very easily satisfied with his illustrations, and so long as they agreed with the general drift of the text, he was not solicitous about details. He wanted something attractive and striking at first sight, corresponding with his own writing, which had the great charm of spontaneity and a happy irresponsibility. He liked both text and pictures to be so plain that he who ran could read, and great numbers did read.

Browne's acquaintance with Lever beginning on a purely business footing, quickly ripened into a durable friendship.

When considering the plan of the third book, *Jack Hinton*, he very sensibly invited Browne to stay with him in Brussels, to see the people and neighbourhood for himself, and confer over the drawings. Browne accordingly went with Samuel Lover, also a congenial spirit. What conferences took place

we know not, but there were certainly high jinks. Lever, besides being a fashionable doctor and author, had constituted himself a leader of society, and entertained lavishly. His assemblies not only rivalled but surpassed those of the Embassy, and though ostentatious and splendid, were entirely free and easy. In between the large entertainments there was a continual run of dinners and suppers, which seem to have resembled students' entertainments in the matter of merriment and noise. The parties generally bore a strong resemblance to the carousals described by Lever in his books, and do to a large extent go to prove that he took what lay under his hand for his material, and that his books were not more boisterous than the company he kept.

He was accused by his critics of exaggeration, but it was neither possible nor necessary to enhance the circumstances as they stood. Samuel Lover wrote home a wonderful description of their "orgies" at Lever's house. "They laughed themselves sick over Monsoon, who dined there daily. They held an installation of the Knights of Alcantara, Lover, Lever, and 'Phiz' being made Grand Crosses of the Order, with music procession, and a grand ballet to conclude. They did nothing all day or, in some instances, all night, but eat, drink, and laugh." Lever in a reply to a letter from McGlashan says,

" If I have a glass of champagne left (we finished nine dozen in sixteen days Lover and 'Phiz' spent here), I'll drink your health." For the first time he felt that Phiz and himself had become sworn allies, having arranged on an admirable footing all their future operations. Lever must have exercised a considerable fascination over Browne, and seems to have entirely overcome his natural shyness, for though we can scarcely imagine it, he seems to have fully entered into the spirit of the time and place, and presented all the features of an irresponsible roisterer.

I have the feeling of knowing Lever better than any of the authors, but in reality I saw very little of him, though I heard a great deal, owing to my father several times going away with him, and the visits being always of an unusual and hilarious nature, we had an abundance of amusing anecdotes in the intervals. Gradually there grew up an acquaintance with the man's doings and sayings, not to mention the people he associated with. He did things droller than anything in his books, and his pranks were of precisely that dashing and impulsive character highly congenial to the boyish imagination. He amusingly posed as one who became entangled in the whirl of his festivities, and as being really a person of mild and decorous manner, and on one

occasion, when the reviewers taxed him with uproarious and riotous living, he wrote a reply saying the character of his books for uproarious people and incidents were mainly due to the drawings of Master Phiz. I think this audacious statement became a sort of proverb in our house, and when Lever came out with one of his usual escapades, we used to say "Ah! ah! there is Master Phiz at his old tricks again," and we might have begun to believe there was something in it, had we not reflected that the etching was always the consequence of the story, and never the reverse.

I subjoin an extract from *Jack Hinton*, a description of a ball given by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rooney, people who were endeavouring to make their way in society in Dublin, from which it may be gathered that Lever did not need any assistance from Master Phiz in imagining a tumultuous festivity.

"An increased noise and tumult below stairs at the same moment informed me that the supper-party were at length about to separate. I started up at once, wishing to see Miss Bellew again ere I took my leave, when O'Grady seized me by the arm and hurried me away. 'Come along, Hinton: not a moment to lose; the duke is going.' 'Wait an instant,' said I, 'I wish to speak to . . .' 'Another time, my dear fellow, another time. The

duke is delighted with the Rooneys, and we are going to have Paul knighted!' With these words he dragged me along, dashing down the stairs like a madman. As we reached the door of the dining-room we found his Grace, who, with one hand on Lord Dudley's shoulder, was endeavouring to steady himself by the other. 'I say, O'Grady, is that you? Very powerful burgundy, this . . . It's not possible it can be morning?' 'Yes, your Grace, half-past seven o'clock.' 'Indeed, upon my word, your friends are very charming people. What did you say about knighting someone? Oh, I remember! Mr. Rooney, wasn't it? Of course, nothing could be better!' 'Come, Hinton, have you got a sword?' said O'Grady, 'I've mislaid mine somehow. There, that'll do. Let us try and find Paul now.' Into the supper-room we rushed: but what a change was there! The brilliant tables, resplendent with gold plate, candelabras, and flowers, were now despoiled and dismantled. On the floor, among broken glasses, cracked decanters, pyramids of jelly, and pagodas of blancmange, lay scattered in every attitude the sleeping figures of the late guests. Mrs. Rooney alone maintained her position, seated in a large chair, her eyes closed, a smile of Elysian happiness playing upon her lips. Her right arm hung gracefully over the side of the chair, where

lately his Grace had kissed her hand at parting! Overcome, in all probability, by the more than human happiness of such a moment, she had sunk into slumber, and was murmuring in her dreams such short and broken phrases as the following: 'Ah! happy day . . . What will Mrs. Tait say? . . . The Lord Mayor indeed! . . . Oh! my poor head: I hope it won't be turned . . . Holy Agatha, pray for us! your Grace, pray for us! . . . Isn't he a beautiful man? hasn't he the darling white teeth?' 'Where's Paul?' said O'Grady. 'Where's Paul, Mrs. Rooney?' as he jogged her rather rudely by the arm. 'Ah! who cares for Paul?' said she, still sleeping: 'don't be bothering about the like of him.' 'Egad! this is conjugal, at any rate,' said Phil. 'I have him,' cried I, 'here he is!' as I stumbled over a short thick figure who was propped up in a corner of the room. There he sat, his head sunk upon his bosom, his hands listlessly resting on the floor. A large jug stood beside him, in the concoction of whose contents he appeared to have spent the last moments of his waking state. We shook him, and called him by his name, but to no purpose; and as we lifted up his head, we burst out a-laughing at the droll expression on his face; for he had fallen asleep in the act of squeezing a lemon in his teeth, the half of which

not only remained there still, but imparted to his features the twisted and contorted expression that act suggests. 'Are you coming, O'Grady?' cried the duke impatiently. 'Yes, my lord,' cried Phil, as he rushed towards the door . . . 'This is too bad, Hinton, that confounded fellow could not possibly be moved; I'll try and carry him.' As he spoke, he hurried back towards the sleeping figure of Mr. Rooney, while I made towards the duke. As Lord Dudley had gone to order up the carriages, his Grace was standing alone at the foot of the stairs, leaning his back against the banisters, his eyes opening and shutting alternately as his head nodded every now and then forward, overcome by sleep and the wine he had drunk. Exactly in front of him, but crouching in the attitude of an Indian monster, sat Corny Delany. To keep himself from the cold he had wrapped himself up in his master's cloak, and the only part of his face perceptible was the little wrinkled forehead, and the malicious-looking fiery eyes beneath it, firmly fixed on the duke's countenance. 'Give me your sword,' said his Grace, turning to me, in a tone half sleeping, half commanding; 'give me your sword, sir.' Drawing it from the scabbard, I presented it respectfully. 'Stand a little on one side, Hinton. Where is he? Ah! quite right. Kneel down, sir, kneel down,

I say!' These words, addressed to Corny, produced no other movement in him than a slight change in his attitude, to enable him to extend his expanded hand above his eyes, and take a clearer view of the duke. 'Does he hear me, Hinton? . . . Do you hear me, sir?' 'Do you hear his Grace?' said I, endeavouring with a sharp kick of my foot to assist his perceptions. 'To be sure I hear him,' said Corny. 'Why wouldn't I hear him?' 'Kneel down then,' said I. 'Devil a bit of me'll kneel down. Don't I know what he's after well enough? Ach ma bocklish! Sorrow else he ever does nor make fun of people.' 'Kneel down, sir!' said his Grace, in an accent there was no refusing to obey. 'What is your name?' 'O murther! O heavenly Joseph!' cried Corny, as I hurled him down upon his knees, 'that I'd ever lived to see the day!' 'What is his d——d name?' said the duke passionately. 'Corny, your Grace, Corny Delany.' 'There, that'll do,' as with a hearty slap of the sword, not on his shoulder, but on his bullet head, he cried out, 'Rise, Sir Corny Delany!' 'Och, the devil a one of me will ever get up out of this same spot. O wirra, wirra! how will I ever show myself again after the disgrace?' Leaving Corny to his lamentations, the duke walked towards

the door. Here about a hundred people were now assembled, their curiosity excited in no small degree by a picket of light dragoons, who occupied the middle of the street, and were lying upon the ground, or leaning on their saddles, in all the wearied attitudes of a night-watch. In fact, the duke had forgotten to dismiss his guard of honour, who had accompanied him to the theatre, and thus had spent the dark hours of the night keeping watch and ward over the proud dwelling of the Rooneys. A dark frown settled on the duke's features as he perceived his mistake, and muttered between his teeth, 'How they will talk of this in England!' The next moment, bursting into a hearty fit of laughter, he stepped into the carriage, and amid a loud cheer from the mob, by whom he was recognised, drove rapidly away."

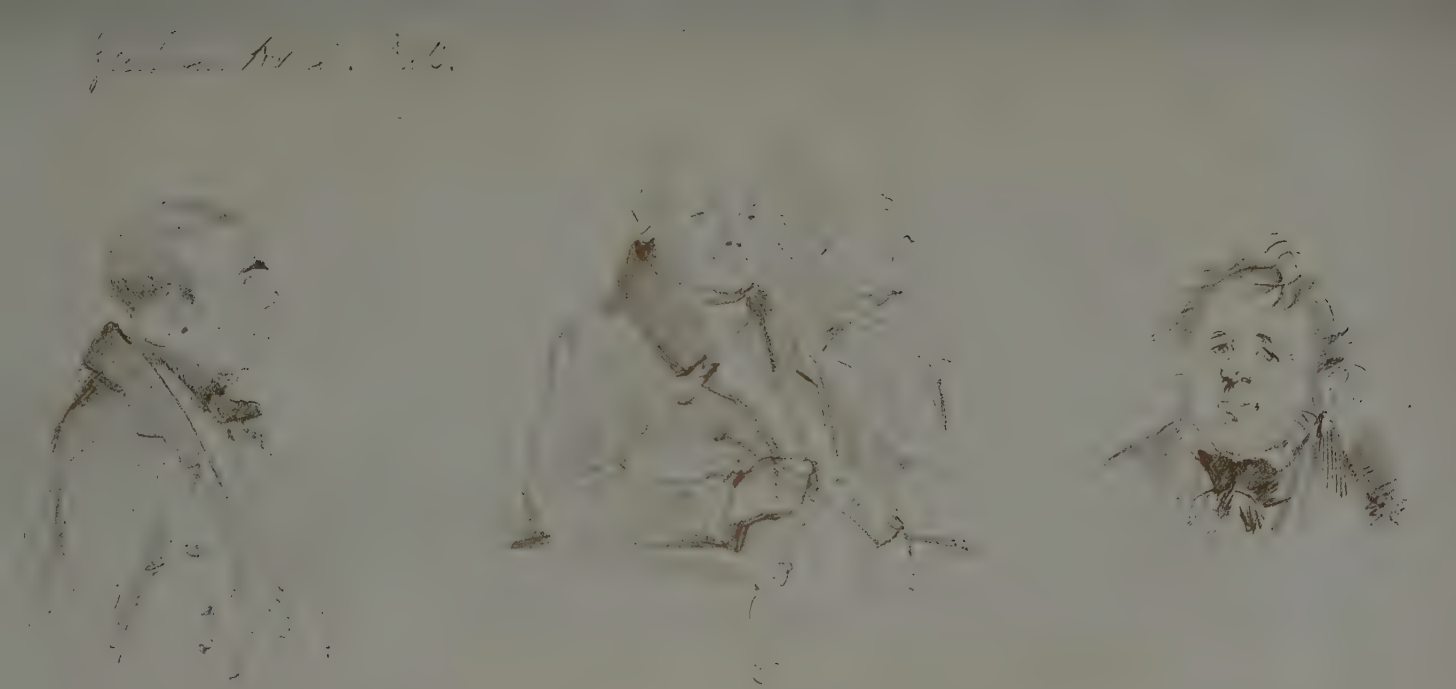
The reader will probably join with the present writer in considering that this brief extract bears a considerable resemblance to the glimpse afforded of the real things by Lover's letter. Even the ceremonial of knighthood is not omitted.

On another occasion, when Browne was touring with Lever in Ireland, they were starting on a journey by one of Bianconi's cars, the proprietor

asked if they were the identical gentlemen concerned in the novels, and hearing they were, he declined to take a fare, a pleasant instance of a prophet being honoured in his own country. As a result of the tours Browne acquired a considerable knowledge of the Irish people, and made a series of about thirty designs in chalk, with the intention of reproducing them by etching, but owing to difficulties of executing etchings of the necessarily large size, the project fell through. Unfortunately he did not consider the feasibility of employing lithography, which he found later on to be admirably suited to his style. The whole series was sold at Christie's and scattered, but a small number were included in the Liverpool Exhibition of his works in 1883, and excited great admiration.

The strongest bonds of union between the two men were a cheery optimism about life and the love of the horse. Both enjoyed rough riding across country. Though it was expedient for Lever to reside abroad, he always suffered from the nostalgia of the Irish hunting field; he made flying visits to the old country from time to time, but settled nowhere till he was appointed Vice-Consul at Spezzia in 1858.

All this time he continued to write by fits and starts,



SKETCHES MADE IN DUBLIN WHILE TOURING WITH LEVER.

Pencil.

and made sufficient money to cut a dashing appearance, and entertain on an extensive scale, which he declared to be a mode of economising, as it kept him fresh and supplied him with characters for his books, and there was some justice in the paradoxical contention, as, unlike Dickens, who modified his models, Lever lifted his characters and their doings bodily into his books, and he sometimes was with difficulty persuaded to alter their names. He took anybody who seemed to offer a chance of amusement, and it is reported that he had once the audacity to have intended laying hands on the Duke of Wellington, and it was only stopped by a serious remonstrance. This genial light-heartedness endeared him to his contemporary readers, who did not want studies of character, psychological analysis, or accurate typographical descriptions, but fun. Among his numerous excellences may be mentioned his power of writing verse, which he shared as a novelist with Thackeray and Harrison Ainsworth. He was peculiarly happy in imitating the kind of rhymes that might fit the mouth of an Irish ballad singer, but the line and sentiment of course were his own, and had oftener a deeper meaning than was apparent on the surface ; for instance, the following might easily be expanded into dull prose, and remain an

excellent description of the "finest peasantry in the world":—

"Och, Dublin city, there is no doubtin',
Bates every city upon the say;
'Tis there you'd hear O'Connell spoutin',
An' Lady Morgan makin' tay.

For 'tis the capital o' the finest nation,
Wid charming pisintry upon a fruitful sod,
Fightin' like divils for conciliation,
An' hatin' each other for the love of God."

He lived for some time at Florence, as usual cutting a dash, and I heard from an outside source that his daughters, who were thoroughly Irish, and resembled their father in high spirits and a genuine love of sport, had an immense reputation as horsewomen in the neighbourhood, and he himself told us that on one occasion at Spezzia he and the two girls were upset from a boat in the bay. I am not at all sure that the bay was not specially enlarged, but at all events he produced an impression of very great remoteness from the shore. They set off to swim, he being behind, in some trepidation, but the girls were laughing and looked back, cheerfully inviting him to come on. We may judge from this they had inherited their father's activity and courage. I tell the tale as it was told to me, but there were

several versions set in circulation in course of time. As Mr. Fitzpatrick says, " In describing adventures, Lever unconsciously embellished " ; this was certainly undeniable. The truth of the story was as follows. Lever, *one* daughter, and a dog were upset into the sea about a mile out. As they were good swimmers and habitually wore swimming costumes they could afford to wait, and took the accident calmly, supported themselves and the dog by grasping oars, and waited till a boat was sent in aid from the shore. Mr. Fitzpatrick in confirmation of the embellishing habit quotes a letter from Mr. Hartpole Lecky, the historian:—

" I well remember how a large tableful of Italian naval officers were electrified by his conversation, and especially by the fire and vividness with which he told a story, which I afterwards found in one of his books, of how he, his daughter and his poodle dog were one day upset in the Gulf, and how they swam, Miss Lever carrying the dog on her back. When Lever left the table, I was greatly amused by the exclamation of one of the officers, who had known him of old. " What a wonderful man that is ! I have heard that anecdote again and again, but it seems always fresh—there are always new incidents.' "

When Lever was on Lake Constance, he wrote to Browne inviting him to come and join him in a tour through Switzerland and Tyrol, offering as a special attraction to drive him with his own nags. Browne replied, " I wish I could accept it, but alas ! Heigho-ho, Harry ! I can't. I have just taken a sort of holiday, and now must buckle on my harness again, and work ! work ! work ! I will do the pretty for *O'Donoghue* title-page. I am in dreadful poor-law-union state of inanition regarding literary news. Of course you read or heard of Dickens' theatricals ? Bulwer, for want of something else to do, is blowing the trumpet for the water doctors ! ' To what strange uses,' &c. He must either have water on the brain or a cataract in his eye."

Later on, Lever was appointed Consul at Trieste. In spite of living in beautiful climates and taking an immense amount of exercise, all his life long he was a sufferer from gout, which ultimately attacked vital organs and caused his death. During the last years of his life he continued to make occasional visits to London and Dublin. It is related that one evening just before dining at the club he was noticed to be depressed, and he remarked on the absence of many old friends. Some one said, pointing to a pile of his books behind him, " There are some old friends who will not pass

away," and began to praise *Harry Lorrequer*. "Ah!" he said, with his usual modesty, "a poor thing, but how well Browne illustrated it!"

He died at Trieste in 1872, having survived Dickens by two years.

Lever's popularity as a writer in his own time was enormous, and was due to the amusing character of his works. Some of these were published anonymously, and were therefore taken on their own merit, and not on the faith of his name. That he did not equal the popularity of Dickens, and has not survived so well, is due to the fact that his books consist largely of scenes and incidents, and not of striking and amusing characters. We have scenes of revelry, amazing runs with the hounds, races, the jockeying of horses, and trickery, kidnapping and evading of bailiffs, incidents of war and battles, all mingled with a fine sense of the amusing side of love-making. But the characters are not so clearly drawn or so ingeniously compounded as to linger in the memory. Lever took very little pains in preparation. He seized the point of an incident, embellished and decorated it, but he would often put in the names of the actors and the locality without taking the trouble to make any alteration. All this was in striking contrast to the painstaking and elaborate preparation of Dickens, but from any of his

books, in the midst of all the frolic and exaggeration, can be found an accurate and sympathetic picture of the Irish people, and there are several really eloquent passages pointing out the mode that should be followed in order to gain their affection and loyalty. In the present day he would be termed an anti-Home Ruler, though he strongly disapproved of the methods of government adopted by the English.

He believed that it was possible for the Union to be maintained and the Irish brought to loyalty by a sympathetic and intelligent treatment.

Two books, *The Knight of Gwynne* and *The Dodd Family Abroad*, may be read for mere amusement, but they may be also profitably studied for their pictures of the sources of Irish discontent and unrest. Kenny Dodd is probably the best example of an Irish absentee landlord in literature. He goes abroad to economise, spends more than he did at home, and gets deeper and deeper into debt, and continually pesters his agent to screw up the rents.

Lever never fell into the error frequently made by Dickens, of attempting to foist on to his books some fragments of a plot. There was no more coherence than there is in real life. There was no particular climax, which did not matter, as there was no particular beginning. The reader's attention was occupied by adventures and incidents,

and not by endeavouring to remember their sequence or significance. He also differed from Dickens, who was wont to describe minutely common and familiar objects as if they were seen for the first time. Lever seldom indulged in any particular description. He dealt in generalities. Mountains might be rugged or fantastic. A house might be a cabin or a castle, but everything was general, and there was nothing sufficiently detailed to aid the reader in identification. His characters lost something of their individuality in the rush and breathlessness of their adventures. His manner resembles more closely that of Alexandre Dumas than of any other of his contemporaries. Both writers were adepts at getting the characters into scrapes and extricating them by plunging them into others, and both seized political plots and conspiracies as affording suitable atmosphere for such doings, and if the Frenchman be the better story-teller of the two, he lacked the saving grace of humour which played so great a part in our countryman's narrative.

Browne remarked more than once that Lever always had bad illustrations, which was not true, although not altogether without justification. The fact was that many were despatched unfinished on account of the author's dilatoriness in furnishing

copy. Lever, although he wrote with considerable facility, and was not sedulous as regards style, jibbed and procrastinated at the beginning, delaying the start till the last moment; moreover, what he habitually wrote abroad was printed in Dublin, and Browne lived on the outskirts of London, and the punctuality of the post was by no means what it has since become, so that the drawings were undertaken and executed in a scramble. Hence whole portions of plates would be left almost blank, with mere suggestions of what ought to be there. On one occasion the *manuscript* was actually lost in transmission, having been mixed up in some Government papers, and the whole number had to be re-written. The illustrations to the first book, *Lorrequer*, were broad caricature (ill drawn, very spirited, and for the most part amusing). They are evidently executed purely from imagination, and the figures bear no resemblance to foreigners or Irishmen. Scarcely anything indicates the lines of Browne's future development, except some slight instances of landscape and architecture in the background. *Charles O'Malley* is obviously a period of transition. In *Jack Hinton*, undertaken after the visit to Brussels, the illustrations show an abrupt change of style, a marked improvement in drawing, without any diminution, but with considerable restraint of the comic powers.

THE POOKA.

A legendary animal seen in some parts of Ireland. He stands quietly grazing in the evening, and allows anyone who wishes to mount him, then gallops wildly over the most impossible places, and suddenly vanishes, leaving the terrified rider to find his way home as best he may. Water-colour, circa 1862. Reduced.

Here we see the beginning of numerous drawings of the horse in action, which both for author and artist is as much hero as man. The horses are invariably full of go, excellently drawn, and very finely etched. They bear marks of first-hand observation and idealisation. Their only fault is that they are too invariably high-bred.

From this time onwards there was a series, of level excellence, of Browne's characteristic work, culminating in the illustrations to the *Knight of Gwynne*, which have that curious felicity in fitting the book noticeable in many of the illustrations to Dickens. Even without making any allowance for the scramble in which they were executed, the average high quality of the invention and technical work is very remarkable. As an instance of the happy-go-lucky way in which the work was carried on, a letter from Browne to Lever may be quoted. Browne writes: "As to myself, when I saw it I was convulsed with laughter. I do not know whether to attribute the mistake to carelessness, stupidity, inebriety, or the practical-joking peculiarities of the writing engraver. I think it is a compound. Orr sent to me for a title to the plate; and as I was rather at a loss how to name the child, I wrote on a slip of paper thus: 1. 'Mark recognises an old acquaintance'; or simply 2. 'The Glen'; or (addressing Orr) 'any-

thing else you like, my little dears '—meaning that Orr might give a better if he could ; and behold ! the writing engraver makes a Chinese copy of the whole ! "

Fortunately the illustration occurs at the very end of *The O'Donoghue*, and there it remains to be seen of all to the present day.

Samuel Lover, above mentioned as the companion of Lever and Phiz in the revels at Brussels, was a versatile man who earned considerable distinction in several directions. By profession he was a portrait painter, and practised his art in Dublin ; he was also a prolific song writer, and I believe a composer. But his main reputation was founded on a very popular novel of Irish life called *Handy Andy*. For many years afterwards the name of the hero was applied to any peculiarly awkward person. In one edition he etched his own illustrations, but in an issue in a periodical I have seen some woodcuts by Phiz. They are, however, of no value.

CHAPTER XIII

HARRISON AINSWORTH—A MAN OF MANY PARTS

HARRISON AINSWORTH was senior to Dickens both in age and authorship, but a pleasant friendship existed between the two men. My father became acquainted with Ainsworth through Dickens some time about the completion of *Pickwick*. When Dickens, Forster, and Browne visited Manchester, Ainsworth gave them introductions to his family and friends. It may be useful to recall Dickens' stage of progress at the time. He began *Nicholas Nickleby* with an exposure of the Yorkshire schools, which was intended to make, and succeeded in making, a great sensation. This formed a good introduction to the book, but had no intimate connection with the story and led to nowhere, being, in fact, merely tacked on as an episode in the life of the hero, and though Dickens had prospered without a plot in *Pickwick*, it was not likely that he could hope to tempt fortune again with success. Even in *Pickwick* he had provided the conventional happy ending by the marriages of Mr. Winkle to Miss Allen and

Sam Weller to Mary the housemaid. Practised readers are aware that though the plot may be obscured in the narrative, it was always present in Dickens' mind, and he considered himself a novelist, and bound to provide the ordinary wares. Therefore he had to look forward to the ultimate restoration of Nicholas to a good position in the world, and to give him the opportunities of a little love-making in a respectable sphere of life, and Dickens was, though appearances were against him, always provident in the matter of his story, and knew what he wanted. He liked to acquire material, even though he did not utilise it. Therefore early on he began to look about for some benevolent person who might extend a helping hand to Nicholas at the necessary moment, and as people of this sort are not abundant in real life, and as Dickens never liked to work without having a foundation of reality, it came about that Ainsworth gave him introductions for the especial purpose of letting him see the brothers Grant, before mentioned. By this means the intended fairy godfather was increased to two, and everybody knows the happy use that was made of the Cheeryble brothers, by whom Nicholas was placed in such a position that he could, in the last number, marry Madeline Bray in the orthodox novel fashion, to the satisfaction of all parties.

Ainsworth was himself a typical dandy of the period. He exactly resembled one of Thackeray's heroes in voluminous and splendid garments and a great superfluity of hair. Whether he unconsciously stood as a model for Thackeray I do not know, but he can be seen in the illustrations to *Pendennis*. He was altogether a splendid person, very different from the ordinary dweller in Grub Street. He had the reputation of being a man of means, and, like his two great contemporaries, delighted to entertain on a lavish scale. In the present day he has no great reputation as an author, and many will be surprised to learn that his popularity, at all events from the point of view of sales, was at one time comparable even with that of Dickens himself, though of course he never possessed the personal magnetism of the other members of the trio.

My father had a very high opinion of his ability, and I at one time thought he overrated him ; but I have since been able to understand the reasons for his estimate, for Ainsworth had certain qualities which marked him off from the general herd of authors. He was an educated man in the accepted meaning of the term, and possessed a whole quantity of out-of-the-way and interesting information about the times of the Renaissance, the customs of guilds, societies, and so forth. He knew the byways of

history, and could move easily in the midst of historical personages from a long acquaintanceship, and not by dint of cram. He was familiar with low Latin and old French verses, which he could adapt to his purpose, and he was very careful to have all his details correct.

But the odd, out-of-the-way learning, his picturesqueness, poetasting, which attracted Browne, did not, as might be supposed, serve to make him the favourite of the general public. That was due to his familiarity with crime, acquired vicariously in early life, when he was intended for the law, and so when the fashion set in for criminal heroes, he was ready primed and beat all competitors. There was Dickens with *Oliver Twist*, Bulwer with *Paul Clifford*, and yet Ainsworth surpassed everybody with *Jack Sheppard*. This rascal seems to have been a criminal of the usual low, unscrupulous kind, who owed his celebrity to his unrivalled power of breaking from prison. In this occupation he showed extraordinary bravery, inventiveness, manual dexterity, and perseverance, so that when his exploits were placed before the public in Ainsworth's picturesque manner, he easily became a popular hero.

The conditions necessary for a popular success are a certain amount of ability in the author—it may be very great, though less might serve—and a public

already primed, perhaps unconsciously, with the subject. Say what we like, mankind in the mass is profoundly interested in crime, but it is only occasionally that it will become enamoured of a low-class criminal. There was undoubtedly at the time of the publication of *Jack Sheppard* a widespread curiosity about the criminal classes. Ainsworth was able to supply the necessary information about these people, not from knowledge acquired to meet the present opportunity, but from a mind long stored with facts and incidents. He wrote as one of his own audience, better informed than the rest, but having precisely the same tastes. He had taught himself thieves' slang as he had taught himself old French, and used it naturally, and as he had a strong talent for versification, he simultaneously became the biographer of the burglar and the author of popular songs.

My father had a detestation of *Jack Sheppard*. I never read a line of it, but I was very familiar with some of the songs. Indeed, it was impossible to escape them, even twenty years after their publication. *Rookwood* we had on our own shelves, and it was always, as the circulating libraries say, " in request." We read it to ourselves, and we read it aloud. We did not regard its hero, Dick Turpin, as a criminal, but rather as a variety of the species of Knight

Errant." I suppose we read the whole book, but remember only the celebrated ride to York.

Our elders must have shared our views, for we had full permission to read the story as often as we liked, and no word of its corrupting influence was ever breathed. Dick Turpin and his mare, Black Bess, were universally known, and if some stern moralists condemned the robber, they admired the horseman. The Ride to York became a stock piece at "Astley's," and even now may be seen in the travelling circus, and probably will be seen till the horse has become a legendary animal. Whether the ride to York was ever accomplished may be uncertain, but Ainsworth has converted it into history. He has achieved the remarkable feat of making fiction appear like truth, by keeping rigidly to the truth about all minor facts, so as to render the central fiction acceptable as truth, in the same manner as an accomplished liar will often pass off a good thumping lie by the circumstantiality of his confirmatory details.

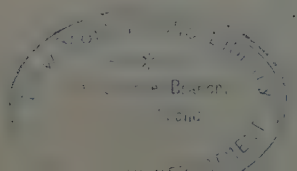
Ainsworth was a changeable creature. It was sometimes difficult to say what he was at a particular moment, and quite impossible to predict what he would become. He had as many mutations as a butterfly, which at certain periods he resembled. He was a lawyer, but anyone wishing to consult

THE TRAMPERS

Design in pen and ink—signed 1842.

him on a legal point might have found he was a publisher and bookseller. Then he was editor of a magazine, a dandy about town, rivalling Count D'Orsay, the supposed head of the species, and finally author. His books underwent curious changes like their writer, not only in composition, but in manner of publication. After triumphing with the *Newgate Calendar*, he ceased "faking away,"[1] dropped his old pals, and started a serious flirtation with the historic muse. He not only aspired to fill, but actually did seat himself upon the throne vacated by Sir Walter Scott. Henceforward we had a series of romances based on historical events, or celebrated personages skilfully woven with the doings of fictitious persons for the amusement of the ordinary novel reader. He was full of the modern taste for correct costume, ancient buildings, archaic dialect, and all the necessary furniture for Wardour Street history. The legal atmosphere of his home and early life having probably made accuracy in minutiæ habitual and easy to him, every detail was carefully described, and the description verified. He did not afford shallow critics the cheap pleasure of pointing out inaccuracies in his history and geography, as they do in Shakespere. He honourably

[1] "Nix my doll pals fake away," refrain of highly popular song in *Jack Sheppard*.



satisfied the scholars, whilst he catered for the man in the street, with hairbreadth escapes, tales of gallantry, duels and street tumults, all naturally arising out of the circumstances of the times.

In quick succession he published *The Tower of London*, *Guy Fawkes*, *Windsor Castle*, *Old St. Paul's*. Strange to say, though they had not a trace of low life in them, these works rivalled their predecessors in popularity. They passed through edition after edition, and were continually reprinted, even to the beginning of the present century. The perplexing question is, Who are the readers? The cultured classes apparently care nothing for him. One never sees allusions to him in the papers, and only two of his criminal heroes are mentioned by name. Why this curious disappearance, and still more curious survival?

The original popularity of Ainsworth's historical novels was probably due to the taste which Scott originated and fostered not having subsided; and the books themselves were easier reading than Scott's for Londoners, owing to the absence of dialect. The unsophisticated reader did, and still does, like his history interwoven with domestic incidents. Although he may be moving through great historical events and mingling with the highest society, he is always ready to enjoy a little love-making and a happy

marriage that reminds him of ordinary humanity. The earlier books, criminal and historical alike, had the advantage of Cruikshank's illustrations, and collectors who never read a line of the text still buy the books for the sake of the etchings. Cruikshank will always be considered the illustrator of Harrison Ainsworth, as Browne is of Charles Dickens. But he did not remain in permanent possession, as may be explained.

Nothing was permanent or on a settled plan with Ainsworth. His books were published in all sorts of different conditions. Several made their first appearance in his own magazine. Some ran as serials in a paper, and one at least was published without any illustrations, which were only added on the appearance of the third edition. One, a story of modern life, *Mervyn Clitheroe*, appeared in the orthodox form in monthly numbers, with two illustrations by Phiz, but the issue ceased with the fourth number, and was, I believe, only continued after the lapse of many years. The stoppage was firmly impressed upon my memory, as the numbers were given to me as they came out, and I was seriously distressed at the loss of what would have been my swell possession. I was a very small boy, but the loss of a First Folio Shakespere could not have occasioned greater dismay to a bibliomaniac.

The first illustrator after Cruikshank was Franklin, who provided a set of plates very highly finished, but rather tame, for *Old St. Paul's*. The drawings were highly esteemed by Ainsworth, but even here the spirit of unrest prevailed, and for a later edition Browne executed as frontispiece and title-page two remarkable drawings, one "The Coffinmaker's Carouse," the other "The Passage of the Plague Cart" filled with dead bodies. Both are finely executed and fantastically horrible. One book, *Crichton*, stands in a category by itself, although it has an affinity with the historical group, but it deals, not with any important events, but with the doings and adventures of the admirable Scot in Paris, at the University, and the Court of Henry the Third of France. There is nothing from defending a thesis, fighting a duel, killing a bull, that Crichton cannot do better than anybody else. He does not even need to keep himself in training, for we find him in between times at all sorts of feasts and jollifications. The book contains a great number of verses, adapted or translated from old French and low Latin, of which I quote one as affording a good idea of his style—he describes them as imitated from a TRENTAINE OF BEAUX SIS accorded in the *Dames Galantes* :—

"THE THIRTY REQUISITES

"Thirty points of perfection each judge understands,
The standard of feminine beauty demands.
Three white :—and without further prelude we know
That the skin, hands, and teeth should be pearly as snow.
Three black :—and our standard departure forbids
From dark eyes, darksome tresses, and darkly-fringed lids.
Three red :—and the lover of comeliness seeks
For the hue of the rose in the lips, nails, and cheeks.
Three long :—and of this you no doubt are aware?
Long the body should be, long the hands, long the hair.
Three short !—and herein nicest beauty appears—
Feet short as a fairy's, short teeth, and short ears.
Three large :—and remember this rule as to size,
Embraces the shoulders, the forehead, the eyes.
Three narrow :—a maxim to every man's taste,
Circumference small in mouth, ankle, and waist.
Three round :—and in this I see infinite charms—
Rounded fulness apparent in leg, hip, and arms.
Three fine :—and can aught the enchantment eclipse,
Of fine tapering fingers, fine hair, and fine lips?
Three small :—and my thirty essentials are told—
Small head, nose and bosom, compact in its mould.
Now the dame who comprises attractions like these,
Will require not the cestus of Venus to please,
While he who has met with a union so rare,
Has had better luck than has fall'n to my share."

More especially in this book are to be noted a complete set of illustrations by Browne. These show him at his best. His powers were at their full maturity; the

romantic subjects were entirely suited to his genius, and were much more to his taste than the comic. The compositions are very elaborate; many are crowded with figures, often in violent action, but the sense of beauty is never absent. There is scarcely a trace of the grotesque, and there is none of humour, but the work has been executed with consummate ease. It might well have been the sketches of an eyewitness instead of the figments of imagination. Browne afterwards illustrated some other works for Harrison Ainsworth, but I believe they have been engulfed in Ainsworth's magazine, which is not easy to come across, but might be well worth the attention of collectors. Anyhow, I have not seen them.

One remarkable circumstance may be noted. Ainsworth had no leaning for the stage, but his works were more frequently dramatised, and with success, than those of any other author.

The three authors, Ainsworth, Lever, and Dickens, were products of their time, and in some ways resembled one another. They were all eminently social and gregarious, made large sums of money by their works, and celebrated their successes by dinners. They can scarcely be described as opponents, as they do not seem to have interfered with one another, and all had remarkably good terms

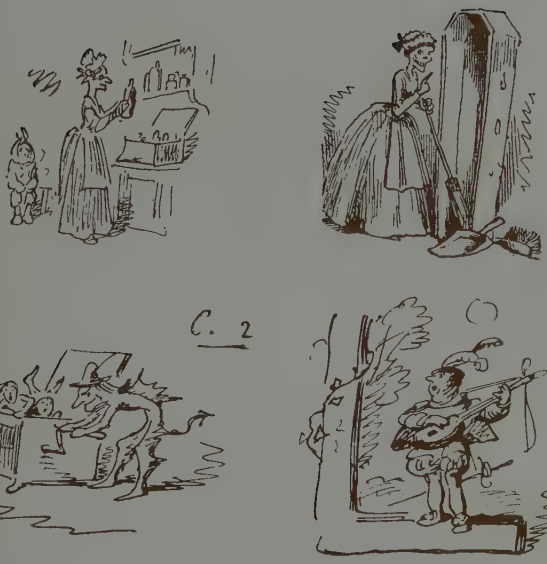
from their publishers. But liberal as the terms were, they were not above the real value of the works. Ainsworth was undoubtedly a man of talent, possessed of industry and erudition, but lacking the indescribable something which is rightly called genius. Throughout his books human nature plays a small part, and the characters do not dwell as living people in the memory of the reader. At one time the irrepressible Cruikshank popped up with a claim of being the author of some of the historical books, and a controversy even appeared in *The Times*. The matter was soon settled to the satisfaction of everybody except Cruikshank. Harrison Ainsworth was very short, and by no means polite.

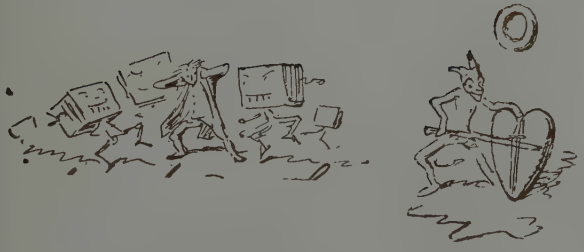
In describing Lever I have spoken of his facility in writing and his fertility. He was the antithesis of Ainsworth. He made little or no use of books, noted the humours of the day as they happened around him, using the full licence of the story-teller, improved, altered, and transformed his material with an inexhaustible invention, but the central part of his story was founded upon fact, and he wrote of men and manners such as they were and as he found them. He possessed the art, by no means an easy one, of conveying the impression of exuberantly high spirits on to the paper. But this kind of thing does not last, it loses its flavour and goes flat

like yesterday's wine. As I have hinted, the historian of the future, desiring to write an account of the Irish people in the fashion of Macaulay's first chapter, will find scattered in the midst of the stories of revels and the escapades of soldiers, material for describing the thoughts and opinions of the Irish people at or about the time of the Repeal of the Union. His books viewed as novels are diffuse, but several of them by judicious editing and compression might probably acquire a new lease of life, and again be found amusing by ordinary novel readers of to-day.

Ainsworth at any time might experience a revival of a moderate popularity for his historical works, as they contain a number of facts carefully compiled and pleasantly stated. There are always to be found a number of people who read fiction with an uneasy feeling that they are wasting their time, but who enjoy themselves if they fancy they are acquiring information, and Ainsworth to this class of mind supplies a want. His criminal fictions are probably dead, as a better article is now supplied from real life in the daily papers with photographic illustrations.[1]

[1] Those desiring a full account of Ainsworth and his works should consult his *Life* in two vols. by Mr. Ellis.





JOTTINGS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER—ORGAN GRINDERS, STREET NOISES, &c.

JOTTINGS ON SCRAPS OF PAPER—INITIAL LETTERS, &c.

CHAPTER XIV

CHARLES DICKENS—HIS HUMOUR AND PATHOS —"A TALE OF TWO CITIES"—A COINCIDENCE

He was the greatest and youngest of the three popular writers, and undoubtedly a man of commanding genius, who in virtue of his great qualities has maintained his popularity from the beginning to the present day. Nobody is as a writer so universally known, no one is held in such affectionate esteem by all classes. Even those who decry his methods, dislike his subjects, and deride his sentiments, are obliged to maintain a familiarity more intimate with him than any other author. His characters are constantly alluded to in conversation, and quoted by public speakers and newspapers; for any reference to his works can be made with the certainty that it will be understood, and, if made in the course of argument, accepted as explanatory and convincing. He is not regarded as a novelist, but as a feature of English life. He is met with wherever the English language is spoken.

A couple of years ago we were being shown round the ancient city of Santiago by an agreeable English-

speaking Spanish gentleman. He showed us the interesting spots in that interesting city, where anything not more than four hundred years old is considered modern. He took us over the cathedral, and explained many things to us, and when we had got ourselves into a thoroughly mediæval frame of mind, as we were going down the broad flight of steps which leads from the porch, he turned towards us, and in a perfectly natural manner said, "What would Pigue-wigue have said of Santiago?" What indeed!

A year later, travelling homewards in the Bordeaux steamer, we made the acquaintance of a pleasant little lady, wife of a missionary, who habitually lived in the near neighbourhood of the great African lakes, among the lions and blackamoors. She and her husband were four days' journey from any whites, and she confessed that though generally satisfied with her occupations, there were times when she felt a feeling of depression and home-sickness. "And then," she added without the least suggestion, "I say to my husband, 'Go and fetch *Pickwick*, and let us have a little bit of Sammy Weller.'" In neither case was there any idea that I was particularly interested in Dickens, nor did I, as the schoolboys say, let on. But a patent medicine could not have had a better advertisement.

Dickens, by his contemporaries, was as much esteemed for his pathos as his humour. But by the present generation his pathos is not found moving. The reason for this striking change is to be found in the difference between his management of his comic and pathetic matter. His humour still appeals to the multitude, and the reason for this remarkable permanence is to be found in his great success, already referred to, in building up and compounding the elements of his work from many sources. He would take the name from one man, the character from another, and the tricks of tongue from a third, and he would so hammer and weld all together, that he made a character individual and impressive enough to appear a reality. When these strange beings, Micawber, or Captain Cuttle, or Mrs. Gamp, began to talk and take part in the action of the book, they were so intimately known to the reader, that they became inexpressibly droll, and as the story progressed, innumerable minute details were added till an absurdity became a reality. His comic technique consisted chiefly of ample and precise descriptions of persons and their surroundings. We know Mr. Micawber's appearance and that of his house, we know Captain Cuttle and his rooms at Mrs. MacStinger's and at the little midshipman's, and we know Mrs. Gamp's toilet secrets, and the

interior of her bedroom, as well as if we had lodged there ourselves. All this serves the purpose of focussing our attention in the required direction, and forcing us into a belief of the reality of his puppets. But when he desires to be pathetic, or even to tell a serious part of the story, he abruptly changes from this excellent method to one vastly inferior. He seems then to take a pleasure in being vague and general.

Well-favoured or beautiful people may not lend themselves so easily to description as oddities, though Sophia Western served pretty well in her time, but we cannot know them at all if they are not described. Mrs. Gamp is not the acknowledged titular heroine of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but Mary Graham and Ruth Pinch share the position between them. We are given scarcely a word of description of these two young ladies, and we do not even know their general appearance, or their style of dress, or any of their sayings and doings. We do indeed learn that Mary Graham rejects the slimy proposals of Pecksniff, and that Ruth Pinch can make a pudding, but as to taking any interest in their love affairs or marriages, it cannot be done.

Dickens was not insensible to female charms—far from it—but feeling that he was called upon to provide a love interest and a happy ending, and being

desirous of treating the matter seriously and raising a pleasurable emotion in the mind of the reader, he aimed at being impressive, and became vague. Here, if anywhere, he should have entered into his minute details of costume and complexion, and charmed the female heart.

It was worse in the case of death. Dickens undoubtedly felt the pain of bereavement in every fibre of his being, and he went over, in his imagination, emotions he had suffered in reality, and transferred them to fictitious beings. We learn in his letters, that in approaching the death of little Nell and of little Dombey, his mind went back to the sorrows in his own family, till their memory became well-nigh insupportable. Undoubtedly the public for whom he wrote were profoundly moved by the accounts of the death of both these children, but of late years they have failed to arouse any emotion.

Something must be allowed for the mode of publication. With a story issued in numbers, the reader is held in expectation for a time, the mind dwells on the future, and an untoward incident tells with double force because it has been awaited, but in the case of a completed book the reader turns over a few pages, reaches the scene, turns over a few more, and it is left behind.

That is not all. We do not feel death unless we

have known the person. We see half a column of deaths in the paper daily, and if we do not read the name of a friend, the catalogue leaves us indifferent, and the writer who could move us by a death must first arouse in us an interest in the living. It is the cessation of an intimate relationship that constitutes the essence of the sorrow of bereavement. Dickens unfortunately failed to realise this truth. We know scarcely anything of little Nell. We have followed her in her wanderings with her grandfather, and we gather that she is of an affectionate nature as many little girls are, but the outlines are blurred, and the presentation is indistinct. We are far better acquainted with Mrs. Jarley. And then when the end comes, instead of focussing our attention on the child, Dickens indulges in some dithyrambic writing in a sort of irregular blank verse, and produces an effect of artificiality, which is fatal.

Little Dombey's death was said to have plunged the whole nation into mourning, but we must remember the whole nation were reading the account at the same time, much as we read of a disaster in the paper. They talked of it and compared notes, and worked upon each other's feelings. The solitary reader is less easily moved; here again we find, where the scene should have been described in simple language, a repetition of the same sort of calculated

THE DEATH OF LITTLE NELL.

Extra illustration to "The Old Curiosity Shop," published by H. K. Browne and Robert Young.

eloquence which is intended to work upon our feelings, with the same unfortunate result. The very title of the chapter, " What the waves were always saying," strikes an artificial note, and conveys a feeling of insincerity that is intolerable. This is the more lamentable, that no one so well as Dickens could have recorded the little trifles that make the sum of a child's life. In both cases the writing is eloquent, but it is eloquence misplaced. The message is not " Behold, the child is dead ! " but " Behold, how grieved I am." The attention is drawn from the sufferer to the recorder. The nation did not mourn because little Paul was dead, but because Mr. Dickens was so sorry.

Throughout his writings, when he changes his technique for the especial purpose of being impressive he becomes relatively dull, but where he keeps to his own natural manner he can venture on to the borders of the grotesque and yet remain human and pathetic. The death of Barkis with his friends around him, and the exhibition, up till the end, of his little mean, cunning, but not dishonest traits, is undeniably moving ; he is a grotesque and ugly little creature, but he is human, and we feel his humanity the more because his grotesqueness and ugliness remain with him till he goes out with the tide.

One instance of a death scene in a later book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, retains its full force to the present day, and it owes its enduring quality to the true method followed in the narrative. Our attention is strongly drawn to the actors, and the narrator is throughout kept in the background. In the early part of the book, at the Old Bailey, where Evrémonde, otherwise Darnay, is tried for his life for treason, and is in imminent danger of condemnation from suborned evidence of his identity on certain suspicious occasions, he is saved by Sidney Carton drawing attention to the strong likeness between himself and the prisoner, thus the resemblance between the two men, which serves an important purpose at the end, is known from the beginning.

Both men are in love with Lucie, daughter of Dr. Manette, who had endured a long imprisonment in the Bastille, and is now quietly settled in London. Darnay marries Lucie, and joins the life of his wife's family, and becomes, to all intents and purposes, an Englishman. Sidney Carton remains as a friend, concealing, though always nursing, his own passion.

At the most disturbed period of the Revolution, Darnay, in answer to a piteous appeal of an old servant in grievous danger, makes his way to Paris. On arriving there he is recognised, thrown into

prison, and condemned to death as an aristocrat. His father-in-law and wife, Sidney Carton, and Mr. Lorry, the trustee, all gather in Paris. Carton bribes a spy already known to him to take him into the prison, ostensibly to say farewell to Evrémonde, otherwise Darnay. At the interview he makes a change of costume with Darnay, and sends him out in place of himself with the spy and assumes the place of the condemned man. The change is effected without discovery, and Darnay leaves the prison with the spy, and joins his family according to a pre-arranged plan. They all set forth in a coach, and get safely out of France.

The change of clothes was not detected, and Carton remains in prison as Evrémonde. He listens for any sign that a discovery had been made, but for a long time there is silence. Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined their meaning, then began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and finally his own. A gaoler, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely saying, " Follow me, Evrémonde ! " and he followed into a large dark room at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with the shadows within, and what with the shadows without, he could but dimly discern the others who were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were standing, some seated.

Some were lamenting and in restless emotion, but these were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing to embrace him, as if having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of discovery, but the man went on A very few moments after that a young woman, with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare face in which there was no vestige of colour and largely wide-opened patient eyes, rose from the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him. "Citizen Evrémonde," she said, touching him with her cold hand, "I am a poor little seamstress, who was with you in La Force." He murmured for answer "True; I forget what you were accused of?" "Plots. Though the just Heaven knows I am innocent of any. Is it likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor, little weak creature like me?" The forlorn smile with which she said it so touched him, that tears started from his eyes. "I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be, Citizen Evrémonde. Such a poor, weak little creature!"

As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

"I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true?" "It was. But I was again taken and condemned." "If I may ride with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your hand? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage!" As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn young fingers, and touched his lips. "Are you dying for him?" she whispered. "And his wife and child." "Hush! Yes." "O, will you let me hold your brave hand, stranger?" "Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last."

* * * * * *

Afterwards at the foot of the guillotine.

* * * * * *

The second tumbril empties and moves on. The third comes up. Crash! And the knitting women, never faltering or pausing in their work, count Two. The supposed Evrémonde descends, and the seamstress is lifted out after him. He has not relinquished her patient hand in getting out, but still holds it as he promised. He gently places her with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirrs

up and falls, and she looks into his face and thanks him. "But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for I am naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death that we might have hope and comfort here to-day. I think you were sent to me by Heaven." "Or you to me," says Sidney Carton. "Keep your eyes upon me, dear child, and mind no other object." "I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let go, if they are rapid." "They will be rapid. Fear not!" The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were alone. Eye to eye, voice to voice, heart to heart, these two children of the Universal Mother, else so wide apart and differing, have come together on the dark highway, to repair home together and to rest in her bosom.

"Brave and generous friend, will you let me ask you one last question? I am very ignorant, and it troubles me—just a little." "Tell me what it is." "I have a cousin, an only relative, and an orphan like myself, whom I love very dearly. She is five years younger than I, and she lives in a farmer's house in the south country. Poverty parted us, and she knows nothing of my fate—for I cannot write—and if I could, how should I tell her? It

is better as it is." "Yes, yes, better as it is." "What I have been thinking as we came along, and what I am still thinking now as I look into your kind strong face which gives me so much support, is this: If the Republic really does good to the poor, and they come to be less hungry, and in all ways suffer less, she may live a long time; she may even live to be old." "What then, my gentle sister?" "Do you think"—the uncomplaining eyes in which there is so much endurance fill with tears, and the lips part a little more and tremble—"that it will seem long to me while I wait for her in the better land, where I trust both you and I will be mercifully sheltered?" "It cannot be, my child; there is no time there, and no trouble there." "You comfort me so much! I am so ignorant. Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?" "Yes." She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than a sweet, bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him—is gone; the knitting women count Twenty-two. "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the

pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass like one great heave of water, all flashes away. Twenty-three."

No one can deny this is noble and profoundly touching writing. It is altogether free from the errors which weakened the effects in earlier instances. The mind of the reader was adequately prepared for the crisis, and the means of the prisoner's escape on account of the likeness of the two men appear as a natural opportunity. The character of Carton has been described clearly and efficiently to prepare us for him acting impulsively and recklessly! He has been described as sharp-witted and fertile in expedients; he is disgusted with himself, tired of life, and thankful to atone for a wasted past by a good deed that will seal the happiness of the woman he loves. Our attention is not distracted by reference to inanimate nature. There is no attempt made to heighten the dramatic situation by the tolling of a bell, or the beating of waves on the shore. The trust of the poor little seamstress, whose innocent blood is to be shed at the same time as his own, provides Carton with that sympathy and approbation that are comforting to a man in his dire situation. He is still a protector to one weaker than himself,

and his last moments are full of active goodness that robs death of its terrors.

A Tale of Two Cities differs in a remarkable degree from any of Dickens' books, written either before or after it. It stands alone in the nature of its subject, and in the methods of treatment. It is the only book that smells of the lamp. I remember seeing the beginning in the rough proof, and taking exception to two phrases: in the exordium: "There were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face on the throne of England; there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a fair face on the throne of France," which, though certainly English, came awkwardly off the tongue, a very unusual circumstance with Dickens, and I remember my father laughing at the description of Jerry Cruncher's spikey hair, and saying that was, at all events, a genuine bit of Dickens.

"Except on the crown, which was raggedly bald, he had stiff black hair, standing jaggedly all over it, and growing downhill almost to his broad blunt nose. It was so like smith's work, so much more like the top of a strongly spiked wall than a head of hair, that the best of players at leap-frog might have declined him as the most dangerous man in the world to go over."

The story is carried forward dramatically, partly in France and partly in England, and the characters are slowly revealed by hints and glimpses, which require to be pieced together like a puzzle. The end is very steadily pursued from the beginning, uninterrupted by any of those overwhelming episodes which interrupt the development of the plot and obscure the action of the serious characters in most of his other books. The dominant note is struck early on by Lucie Manette meeting with her father on his release from his long, long imprisonment in the Bastille. Nothing more natural, truthful, or delicate exists in the English language. It is remarkable in the whole book that there is scarcely any humour or comic writing of any kind. Instead of the crowd of unnecessary persons whom we generally find elbowing the principal serious characters from their places, we have only one, in the account of the resurrection man and his loathsome occupation on one night, and that has a shadowy connection with a mysterious phrase "recalled to life." Jerry Cruncher and his little boy are genuine Dickens characters, but the rest are unusual, and, it must be confessed, do not exhibit any plain marks of the author's genius. The book is also unusually short, being two hundred and fifty-four pages, as against six

hundred and twenty-four both in *Copperfield* and *Bleak House*.

The mode of issue was also peculiar. In order to give a fillip to the circulation of *All the Year Round*, then a new publication, started after Dickens had changed from Bradbury & Evans, he published the story by weekly instalments in its pages, but he also issued it independently in the usual green-covered monthly parts, with two illustrations by Hablot K. Browne. The two issues ran concurrently.

And now a strange thing happened. *A Tale of Two Cities* was only just started in the monthly form, when there was presented at the Adelphi a drama called the *Dead Heart*, founded on the facts and fiction of the French Revolution. It consisted of a prologue and three acts, and dealt with the periods 1771, 1789, and 1794.

At the opening of the piece the hero, Robert Landry, is engaged to be married to Catherine Duval. They both belong to the people, but the Count de St. Valerie, an aristocrat, is violently in love with her, and under the promptings of the villain, the Abbé Latour, St. Valerie, by means of a *lettre de cachet*, sends Landry to the Bastille to get him out of the way. St. Valerie marries Catherine, and they have a son.

At the expiry of eighteen years the Bastille is stormed, and Robert Landry is brought forth into the midst of the Revolutionary crowd. Latour tells Catherine (the widowed Countess de St. Valerie) that Robert still lives. A meeting takes place, and Robert declares to her his project of revenging his wrongs upon her son Arthur de St. Valerie, who shortly afterwards is arrested and condemned to death. The Countess, maddened with grief, appeals to Landry, conjures him by his old love to save her son. Robert holds a position of authority in the prison of the *conciergerie*, and he causes the Abbé Latour to be brought in a prisoner. During a conversation a quarrel arises, and Robert kills Latour.

Very early on the morning of the execution Catherine makes a passionate appeal to Landry for mercy. She tells him that her husband had given Latour an order for his release, which was useless, as proof was brought back that Landry had been found dead upon his prison floor. Robert feels that his vengeance has lost its justification, and he sends a messenger to Robespierre for a passport. He delays the starting of the third tumbril, wherein Arthur is to ride. He ascertains that the prisoners are despatched by a new warder from Marseilles, who does not know any of them by sight. The numbers are called slowly one by one, and the

prisoners despatched. Robert determines to restore the son to his mother, and when number 30 is called, he answers, "Here, and ready." He is taken off to execution. The Countess and her son looking through the window see the devoted man mounting the scaffold, and the curtain falls. Even in this bald outline the reader must perceive the extraordinary resemblance between the book and the drama.

The coincidence is one of the strangest in the history of literature. Two men, unknown to each other, sit down, without any hint in the circumstances of the times, to write of the French Revolution. It was a time of peace, social content, and England supposed her constitution was founded on a rock, and yet day by day they were each constructing a plot compounded of the fall of the Bastille, the movements of the Revolution, and its crisis in the horrors of the Terror, and finishing with the sacrifice of life by substitution in order to secure the happiness of a woman beloved.

Whether the authors evolved the plot entirely from their own imagination (which seems unlikely), or whether an idea was put into their heads by some obscure *feuilleton* dealing with the central incident, and the preliminary stages reconstructed from the imagination to lead up to the climax, it is equally wonderful. Dickens, we know, had a morbid horror

of his books being dramatised, for though the public did not care about his plots, and sometimes even did not recognise their existence, he took great pains to construct his stories, which with a good deal of make-believe could be disentangled from those episodes which are the genuine and unapproachable offspring of his genius. For example, not one reader in ten thousand cared whether Martin Chuzzlewit married Ruth Pinch or not, but when the last number appeared, a whole nation lamented that Sairy Gamp had gone into the silent land, and that the mystery of Mrs. Harris was left unsolved. So it seems likely that Dickens felt himself unable to continue to write towards a climax which was being forestalled night after night at the theatre. But even so, if he had reflected calmly, he would have remembered that only a certain number of people would see the play, and there would still remain thousands upon thousands ready to read anything he wrote, and there must have been many like myself who were able to enjoy both. The play was indeed a first-class melodrama, but on the stage it was full of telling situations. The scene of the attack on the Bastille and the release of the prisoners was full of storm, and the passions of the mob, and worked up the audience to an extraordinary degree of enthusiasm. The cast was strong, and included Benjamin Webster,

Billington, Paul Bedford, Toole, Miss Woolgar, and others of less note. All played with earnestness and conviction, for all were fitted with parts that were full of strong points of the kind dear to actors, that were easily played, and were free from the embarrassment of superfluous words. It had no pretension to literary qualities at all.

Dickens was supposed by many to have shortened his story, and abruptly finished it at the eighth number. The end is certainly huddled up, instead of being spread out and elaborated in the usual Dickens manner.

The play was afterwards revived, and played at the Lyceum by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, and a drama called *The Only Way*, dealing with the story of Sidney Carton, seems in the hands of Mr. Martin Harvey to be perennial, and yet *A Tale of Two Cities* is still read. As a matter of fact, a well-written novel is seldom interfered with by a dramatic version, though a play does suffer by being derived from a widely known book. Judged impartially from a commercial point of view, one advertises the other. Ainsworth had his books continually on the boards, and we never heard of his making any protestation. But whatever may be the decided truth of the origin and termination of the two works, the coincidence of the appearance of *A Tale of*

Two Cities and the *Dead Heart* will always remain one more remarkable than the boldest writer of fiction would have ventured to have employed.

His strong point was his humour. It is not that he said funny things, or devised comical situations, or invented droll personages, though he did all these things, but that he invested everything with an atmosphere of gaiety. Cheerfulness was the key-note, which might be developed on the one hand into merriment, and on the other to tearfulness. He surveyed external nature and ordinary things and the common objects of daily life—mean streets, commonplace people and everyday occurrences—as if they had never been seen before, and therefore merited a minute and particular description. He was full of the *joie de vivre*. He bubbled over with enjoyment, and he called upon his readers to join him, and it is an extraordinary circumstance that they answered the call, and when he wanted them to look upon something they had seen a thousand times before, they approached it as a novelty and were delighted.

This curious quality was something new in literature, and though of course it has been imitated, it has not succeeded in the hands of anyone except the inventor. His marked originality of style was not slowly elaborated and perfected. It existed

almost from the beginning, and scarcely altered till the end, except in trimming away a little exuberance. The keynote was struck in *Pickwick*, with the description of the entertainment at Mr. Wardle's, and it runs through the book, pervading the decorous atmosphere of the Court of Law and the dismal precincts of the Fleet Prison.

The temperamental quality of his style had a firm basis in a certain mental aptitude, which under other circumstances might have been employed in scholarship or science. As a foundation we see a marvellously rapid, minute, and particular observation of places and people which were so accurately remembered, that they could be reproduced at any moment they were wanted. There was none of the preliminary cramming of the modern realist.

For example, we know he was at Bath, and only for a short time, in his reporter stage, and then was fully occupied. But when it occurred to Mr. Pickwick and his friends to go there, Dickens writes as if he and his readers intimately knew the place and the people. The visitors do not go here and there vaguely wandering through a vaguely described town. They go to Queen Square and to Park Street, which they consider "very much like the perpendicular streets a man sees in a dream, and which he cannot get up for the life of him." Mr.

Pickwick and his friends lodge in the upper portion of a house in the Royal Crescent. They visited the great Pump Room, and we learn that "it is a spacious saloon ornamented with Corinthian pillars, and a music gallery and a Tompion clock,[1] and a golden inscription to which all the water drinkers should attend, for it appeals to them in the cause of a deserving charity." This is quite precise, and might serve for the pages of the Bath Guide, and not for the background of a small party of gentlemen out for a holiday. The Master of the Ceremonies makes our acquaintance, and besides his manners, we hear of every detail of his costume :—

"Dressed in a very bright blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly-polished boots. A gold eyeglass was suspended from his neck by a short, broad black ribbon ; a gold snuff-box was lightly clasped in his left hand ; gold rings innumerable glittered on his fingers ; and a large diamond pin set in gold glistened in his shirt frill. He had a gold watch with a gold curb chain with large gold seals ; and he carried a pliant ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest, and

[1] Thomas Tompion, "the father of English watchmaking," born 1639, died 1713.

stiffest; his wig of the glossiest, blackest, and curliest. His snuff was Prince's mixture; his scent, *bouquet du roi*. His features were contracted with a perpetual smile; and his teeth were in such perfect order, that it was difficult at a little distance to tell the real from the false."

This is a woman's eye for the details of costume. Hundreds of people have been in the room, and barely noticed there was a clock, and certainly not noticed who was the maker, but these piled up details produce an impression of truth for no other reason than that they are solid facts, and give the air of great credibility to the extravagant antics of some most respectable Cockneys. Nobody reads *Pickwick* as fiction; it is as truthful as *Robinson Crusoe*, which is well known to be the most veracious book of travels ever published.

In no distant day a Dr. Birkbeck Hill will arise who will edit *Pickwick*, verifying all the localities and explaining all the allusions, and shed a lustre over his university.

It is certainly very remarkable that a young man should draw a detailed picture of this kind of a place where he was little more than a passer-by.

When he describes persons or things, he has an odd fanciful way of seeing or remembering a likeness to

something else, which assists in giving a clear idea of his meaning, and being followed out often becomes decidedly droll. This habit of allowing his fancy to play about, preserves his descriptions from flatness and renders them interesting and amusing, so that his books are generally excellently adapted for reading aloud, but they are the worst that were ever written for the purpose of skipping. The comparisons often seem far-fetched and are always unexpected, but invariably elucidatory. For instance, he describes an unmarried lady of a certain age: "She was a little dilapidated—like a house—with having been so long to let, yet had an appearance of good looks."

Or Mr. Barkis in bed with the rheumatics. "As he lay in bed, face upwards, and so covered, with that exception, that he seemed to be nothing but a face—like a conventional cherubim—he looked the queerest object I ever beheld."

Or Mr. Spenlow's respectability. "His gold watch-chain was so massive, that a fancy came across me that he ought to have a sinewy golden arm to draw it out with, like those which are put up over the goldbeaters' shops."

The description of Doctors' Commons. "The languid stillness of the place was only broken by the chirping of the fire and the noise of one of the

doctors who was wandering slowly through a perfect library of evidence, and stopping to put up from time to time at little roadside inns of argument on the journey."

Of an old-fashioned house. " A shy, blinking house, with a conical roof going up into a peak over its garret window of four small panes of glass, like the cocked hat on the head of an elderly gentleman with one eye."

Of a raven. " Grip fluttered to the floor, and went, not at a walk or run, but at a pace like that of a very particular gentleman with exceedingly tight boots on, trying to walk fast over loose pebbles."

Of Mr. Pecksniff, " as generally keeping his hand on his waistcoat, as though he were ready, on the shortest notice, to produce his heart for Martin's inspection."

Again : " It would be no description of Mr. Pecksniff's gentleness of manner to adopt the common parlance, and say that he looked at this moment as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. He rather looked as if any amount of butter might have been made out of him, by churning the milk of human kindness as it spirted upwards from his heart."

Again when " Mr. Pecksniff, towering on tiptoe

among the curtains as if he were literally rising above all worldly considerations, and were fain to hold on tight to keep himself from darting skywards like a rocket."

" M. Todgers, the boarding-house keeper, was a lady—rather a bony and hard-featured lady—with a row of curls in front of her head, shaped like little barrels of beer, and on the top of it something made out of net—you couldn't call it a cap exactly—which looked like a black cobweb."

The doorway of a Georgian house at Canterbury: " There were two great aloes in tubs on the turf outside the windows, the broad hard leaves of which plant, looking as if they were made of painted tin, have ever since been symbolical to me of silence and retirement."

Of Mr. Cruncher eating his breakfast: " Taking a bite out of his bread and butter, and seeming to help it down with a large invisible oyster out of his saucer."

The above *obiter dicta* are quoted because they show that Dickens did not invent odd expressions and queer comparisons solely for the enhancement of the drollery of his characters, as exemplified in the conversation of Tony and Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp, but they are found pervading the descriptive text, and are woven in the very warp and woof of it.

They indicate that the characters are not gathered from the outside, but are projected from the very mind of Dickens himself. They serve two purposes; first, in creating an atmosphere which makes the characters seem natural, secondly, in rendering the descriptive passages sparkling and effective.

An Opinion on Pomps and Vanities

By the kindness of Mr. H. P. Harrison, of Mossley Hill, Liverpool, I am able to print an unpublished letter written on the occasion of Dickens' last public appearance in Liverpool. It is self-explanatory, and is an interesting statement of Dickens' views on such subjects.

"Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool,
"*Monday, Fifth April*, 1869.

"Sir,—In reply to your letter of enquiry, I beg to inform you that I have never used any other armorial bearings than my father's crest:—a lion couchant, bearing in his dexter paw a Maltese cross. I have never adopted any motto, being quite indifferent to such ceremonies.

"Faithfully yours,

"Charles Dickens.

"James Orr Marples, Esq."

CHAPTER XV

HABLOT BROWNE: HIS PERSONALITY AND WORKS

In the preceding pages I have endeavoured to give the impressions left on the mind of a child by certain men and the circumstances of their times. I have related simply the chronicles of small-beer which may have been beneath the dignity of more ambitious writers, but which seem to me to have contributed the necessary elements in the picture unfolded before me by memory, aided of course owing to my tender years by family tradition and information derived from friends, of whom Uncle Bob was chief. Without some understanding of the surprising difference in social life, and the vast changes that have taken place in English modes of thought and the appearance of the country, I should fail in drawing any trustworthy portrait of the man in whom I am most interested. Human nature remains much the same in all ages, but the doings of human beings vary infinitely, although they are always strongly influenced by the doings of the mass. I propose now to gather up the

IMPRESSIONISTIC VIEW OF THE COUNTRY ABOUT BANSTEAD.

Water-colour, circa 1800. Reduced from 19½ *in.* × 13¼ *in.*

scattered threads, and picture Hablot Browne as a man of middle age, according to my accumulated experience of him during the most impressionable period of my life, and here I rest directly on my own observation.

My father was of medium height and of stalwart appearance, and though not tall, was a striking-looking man as regards the head. He had, like all his family, a long body, with short limbs, a quantity of brown hair, very fine in quality, worn long according to the mode, for anyone wearing his hair cropped, according to the present fashion, would have been subjected to gibes and inquiries from street boys asking when he came out, meaning from the gaol.

Although like all engravers he was shortsighted, he had a particularly penetrating eye, and he seemed rather to look through than merely at you. He had a mobile and sensitive mouth, short whiskers, and at a later period he grew a beard and moustache which, by hiding the mouth, deprived his face of some of its expression. He was very careless about his dress, and had to be taken by force to the tailor, as he never knew when his suits were worn out. He generally affected dark grey, and disliked on the one hand the gloominess of black, on the other the gaiety of colour, though of course he sported the

orthodox black coat on occasions, and from time to time in the summer he followed the early Victorian custom of wearing white ducks, which were very popular, strange though it may seem to us. The custom was maintained partly under the delusion that the weather was hot, and partly as a sort of compliment to the Duke of Wellington. There was nothing flamboyant or suggestive of Bohemia about him, as we often see in artists nowadays. Indeed, I remember a tailor once saying to him at a fitting-on, "There, you look like a banker." If he did, the likeness was entirely superficial, and imposed upon nobody. He hunted for some years in a black coat and top-hat, but afterwards wore the scarlet coat and velvet cap of his Hunt.

He lived so entirely in his work and a world of imagination, that it is impossible to describe him in the ordinary terms. Politics he had none, though when questioned at election times he said he was a Liberal, more, I believe, because he liked the sound of the word, than from any clear idea of its political significance. He certainly had a holy horror of Radicals. Cobden and Bright he considered humbugs—why, I do not know. He took sufficient interest in the outer world to read *The Times* in the evening, but his interest lay in general events and not in politics.

He was ignorant of the ways of the world, and took far too favourable a view of his fellow-creatures. He lived under the delusion that people generally were disposed to befriend and serve him. He never realised that he was being exploited, as was often the case. That there was a struggle going on for place and profit, and that there were people fully disposed to give him a push downwards for objects of their own, never occurred to him. He neglected his own interests, as may be judged from the following letter from John Forster, who appears in a favourable light as compared with many others :—

No date or address.

"My dear Browne,—They are getting a little anxious at White Friars. I enclose you a cheque—you charged too little for the design of the cover. I took the liberty of changing the five guineas into eight guineas, and you will find the cheque hereto corresponding.

"This liberty I am sure you will excuse, and believe me, my dear Browne, always sincerely yours, John Forster.

"Just received the plates. Send me word what you think the writing underneath should be."

Between Browne and Forster a friendly feeling always existed, though it never ripened into a warm friendship. My father was wont to call him a "little Doctor Johnson," from which may be inferred a certain amount of pomposity in literary style, but the great Doctor's lucidity was wanting. Forster's own style was involved and tortuous, and sometimes obscure. It was rather in the matter of laying down the law that the resemblance lay.

A cabman is supposed to have hit him off exactly on one occasion in the police court. The cabman explained that it was not only his parsimony, but his conduct that was objectionable. The magistrate asked where the offence lay, and what Mr. Forster had done to him. "Well," he said, "he's such a harbitrary gent."

He was entirely indifferent to public opinion, and lived his own life, but was very careful about annoying other people. He cared nothing for titles, and had no wish for what is known as social position. He had scarcely any ambition, and certainly regarded himself as a very ordinary person. He had no desire to make money beyond what was necessary for the immediate wants of the household. He disliked gambling, as he explained, if he won, he did not like taking the money, and if he lost, he was still more annoyed. This was the more remarkable

as we lived for so many years within easy reach of Epsom, and it was his custom to ride over to many of the important meetings, but I never heard of him making a bet. We were driven over by the groom in the chaise to the Derby, but I never saw the Oaks run. Our custom was to drive to a certain knoll which commanded a view of the starting post, but when the horses got off we galloped at the top of our speed a few hundred yards to another place of vantage, where we had a view of Tattenham Corner. The Governor generally joined us, and we had a sort of picnic in the chaise. Thus we had a long day in the open air, full of a sense of rush and motion, crowds and festivity, and a feeling of taking part in an important national event, without being brought into contact with the blackguardism that abounded in the crowd.

He spent the greater part of his time in the studio, and when out of doors, he preferred being in the saddle. He would never walk fifty yards if he could throw his leg over a horse. I don't think he regarded himself as quite complete if he was on foot. As we could not be all mounted, when he joined in the family rambles the pony-chaise was always taken, and walked over the most extraordinary places where there was no road, over fields, bridle-paths, downs and heaths, the Governor leading the pony. The return journey

was generally managed by the road. We broke a good many springs, but we enjoyed ourselves greatly.

He was in a remarkable degree the centre of the household. My mother adored him, and considered he could do no wrong. We boys regarded him as our best friend, and, except a little irritability on the score of noise, I never saw him in anything approaching a bad temper. When a hubbub became unbearable he would sometimes appear with a hunting crop and lay about him and so restore order, but though there was a great appearance of vigour, and great sounds of cracking the whip, there was little damage done. His appearance was generally cheerful and debonair. Indiscreet friends often gave us musical instruments in the shape of drums, trumpets, and so forth, which, after a short service, mysteriously disappeared in the night. On some occasion of a move, or special spring-clean, a huge cupboard was found filled with a whole orchestra of these things, and he was forced to confess that he had concealed them. Even that place of trial, the dinner table, found him unruffled, although he was by no means insensible to good cooking. He ate anything that was given him without a growl. But with all his gentleness, he was by no means a muff, although he was easily deceived by people

in whom he believed. He was occasionally unexpectedly sharp, and though he was preserved by a curious kind of pride from taking any revenge or making any kind of fuss, he quietly dropped the offender. He was a brave man, and faced danger with calmness ; physical pain he bore with amazing fortitude.

He had a keen sense of humour and of the ridiculous, but was very soon hurt, and strongly sentimental. He concealed this, and was very much ashamed of it. I believe that having to exploit his comic power professionally he had deceived himself, and rather thought he was a fellow of good commonsense with no nonsense about him. He was certainly surprised, and a little annoyed, when George Henry Lewes, after studying his face for some time, used the freedom of a professional critic to say he could not see any humour, but he saw a great deal of sentiment.

He was by nature shy and given to self-effacement, and when he became a busy man, and had consequently little time or opportunity for social amusements, these tendencies increased till his dread of strangers amounted to a detrimental feature in his character. It became very difficult to make him go anywhere. At the beginning of his career he was certainly considered a cheer-

ful companion, and took a part, if he found himself in congenial company, in any fun that was going. In his own house, even after he had given up visiting, if people could be brought to him, he was always a cheerful host. I remember on festivals, like Twelfth Night, he was by no means backward in promoting the general merriment, and enjoyed these friendly gatherings. But by living so much alone in his studio, having an innate dislike of push, and a sort of natural distrust of strangers, he gradually worked himself up till it was difficult to get him to see anybody except intimate friends. He did not realise that there must be a stage before intimacy.

He endeavoured to imbue us with his own failings. He took particular pains to impress upon us that we should not go where we were not wanted, and he drew a picture of a sort of bogey man in every house trying to resist our importunate clamouring for entry at his door. He would have had a great effect upon us—indeed he had more than was beneficial—and if it were not a law of nature that young people are gregarious, we should have had few friends. But by using our opportunities, we made a great many in other people's houses. Though we were hedged in and cautioned against intruding, he never said a word if we filled our own with pals. No objection was ever raised, even if his dinner

was put off, or a few squares of the dining-room windows smashed. His good temper prevailed. Dinner was quite as pleasant in the breakfast room. Where there are boys and balls broken panes are a logical consequence, and a glazier was always ready to attend at the shortest possible notice. The only flaw in the reasoning was that other people might be as complacent as himself, and that we were no greater barbarians than our friends.

CHAPTER XVI

PHIZ THE ILLUSTRATOR

"PICKWICK" AND "NICKLEBY"

To leave the man and come to his work.

It has already been related how on the death of Seymour, Browne was engaged to illustrate *Pickwick*. He was very young, and with very little experience in illustrating, and to follow a popular favourite like Seymour was no easy task. Obviously the first thing to be done was to please the public, satisfy the author and the publishers, and not to exhibit any marked inferiority to his predecessor. He not only succeeded in equalling, but surpassing Seymour. It was soon recognised that the understudy possessed the excellences of his predecessor, and in addition some which were peculiar to himself.

The early plates as regards figures were evidently modelled on those of Seymour, with a little more refinement, but with about the same amount of caricature. The Pickwickians, of course, in order to preserve a continuity, were taken directly from Seymour's inventions. Then came up in rapid succession a number of new characters who were

all original and excellent, but the illustrations are further distinguished by the finer quality of the backgrounds. There was always something bare and insufficient about the previous backgrounds, whereas Browne's became an integral part of the picture. Note, for example, the background of the galleried yard of the old inn, where Sam Weller is interviewed by Mr. Wardle and his friends who are in pursuit of Jingle, how it takes away from the grotesquery of the crowd, and lends an air of beauty to the whole composition. This is carried a step further in a smaller inn yard in *Nicholas Nickleby*, where Newman Noggs is saying good-bye to Nicholas. The sense of beauty is there intensified by the sketches of two comely chambermaids who are leaning over the balustrade talking to their friends below. This tendency to introduce a beautiful trifle in attenuation of a grotesque belongs to Browne, and is seen in no other caricaturist of his time.

In The Fat Boy awake, though the group tells the story vividly, it only forms part of a composition of which the architecture of the house is equally well delineated, and which prevents the drawing appearing wholly as a caricature. When Mr. Pickwick slides he has a background of a very pretty landscape. Whether the accessories be architectural, or landscape, or interiors which cannot be

beautified, they invariably form part of the composition, and add to the comprehension of the story.

We note in his earlier books an evident belief in his duty to be comic at all costs, and it is noteworthy that when he indulges in anything graceful, he seems to do it on the sly, and rather as a concession to his own weakness than to open display. We shall be able to see instances of this by comparing some drawings done for his own pleasure with those which were actually published. He was a product of his times and of the immediate past, and we must remember that there was a traditional belief that ugliness was funny. Feelings were coarse, and coarsely expressed. A man with any deformity was openly laughed at, and might be jeered at or even hooted in the streets. Rowlandson (born 1756, died 1827), who was the ancestor of early Victorian caricature, and undoubtedly set the fashion for the succeeding comic draughtsmen, had a fine sense of beauty. There are even to be found in his pictures female figures which for gracefulness had never been surpassed, yet his drawings are crammed with people, obese, flabby-cheeked, broken-nosed, one-eyed, bandy-legged, crook-backed, bald-headed, knock-kneed, loathsome and deformed, who were supposed to be amusing, and who did indeed vastly amuse the public.

Browne came about the turn of the tide, to serve a public avid for comicality, and with a traditional taste for ugliness and distortion. As a young man he was anxious to please, and as it happened that the current literature was vitiated by similar errors in taste, his path was set out for him in the wrong direction from the first. And then for a young man, imperfectly trained in the art of drawing, it was easier to succeed in the grotesque than in the beautiful, for the one needs only approximate correctness, but the other depends entirely on good draughtsmanship for the realisation of an ideal. We therefore find him in the early Dickens books pushed on by circumstances into the position of caricaturist, and it is not surprising that the glimpses of beauty are so infrequent and modest, but rather that there were any at all. The public did not ask for them, but there seems reason to suppose that they had an effect in insinuating a taste which for some time to come was latent and not acknowledged.

One thing is certain, whatever his faults or virtues Browne exactly fitted the situation, and was rapturously applauded by his contemporaries. We must remember, though it is difficult to realise the fact, that Dickens, in the earlier parts of *Pickwick*, was almost an unknown man. If he had been an ordinary

writer, depending upon a continuous story, or even a series of adventures, he might not have overcome the clumsy machinery of the monthly parts, but he was entirely independent of his story, and relied consciously on an untried, but prodigious, capacity for the invention of eccentric characters. In one of his letters he says that he expects to make a success with a new character in the next part. The character was Jingle, who was in fact infinitely amusing. The ordinary writer introduced his few characters at the beginning of the book, and relied on them for the remainder of the story. But Dickens continually produced new and important characters, so that each monthly part was likely to contain, to his reader's great delight, a surprise and an improvement. One of the means adopted for giving publicity to this unsuspected wealth of ideas was by means of illustrations, which from month to month were exposed in booksellers' shop windows. It was therefore important that the illustrator should be himself of a ready wit, and capable of dealing with what Mr. Venus later on called "assorted warious."

Browne exactly filled the situation. If he had been an ordinary young artist with an insufficient training he would probably have made use of models, and improved the academical character

of his figures with a corresponding destruction of their vivacity and eccentricity, but tameness was the unforgivable sin. He was not appalled by any difficulty in drawing, but he had a vivid imagination which enabled him to realise a scene or a character from a few hints. He drew after the fashion of a child who will draw you a picture of anything without even glancing at the reality. To this faculty of reproducing at will unconscious impressions he owed most of his excellences, together with most of his faults. Careful adherence to fact, and conscientious reproduction of the model and still life, would have resulted in drawing that might have had a great artistic value, but would not have represented Dickens in the slightest degree. The public did not want tame or beautiful pictures. For those they went to the Royal Academicians and line engravings, which were to be had of excellent quality, but the demand for eccentric characters seems to have been insatiable.

Dickens fostered the taste, and produced an enormous number of novelties, and when he produced any fresh character, Browne seemed to have something suitable and ready up his sleeve.

One of his excellences was that he was never at a loss, and did not require time to think. He could act on the spur of the moment. He frequently had

to exercise his invention, and it was better for the purpose to overstate than understate, and as a result there was visible embodiment of a succession of persons who became familiar friends. The illustrations were in fact the "cartes de visite" of the characters. Besides the Pickwickians and Jingle, who belonged to Seymour, we have Mr. Sam Weller, Job Trotter, Mr. Bob Sawyer, and Benjamin Allen, Mrs. Bardell and Mrs. Cluppins, The Shepherd, who is immortal as Stiggins, and Mr. Tony Weller, not forgetting the admirable group of stout stage coachmen drinking the health of Mr. Pell.

In *Nickleby* we have Squeers and John Browdie, Ralph Nickleby, Arthur Gride, Mr. Mantalini, Sir Mulberry Hawke, Lord Verisopht, the Cheeryble Brothers, Tim Linkinwater, Mrs. Nickleby, Miss Knag, Miss La Creevy, Newman Noggs, the Kenwigs family, Mr. Lillyvick and Miss Petowker, the Crummles family and Smike.

The illustrations in *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* exhibit the same features. In the latter there is scarcely any change, either in general conception or handling, the drawing does not improve much, and the comic power remains undiminished.

From the beginning there is shown a most remarkable sense of composition. It matters little whether there are a few figures or many, they are

always well arranged, and though the disposition is more artificial than natural, they present the appearance of being entirely natural and not depending on art. The more crowded a composition, the more manageable it seems. Take, for example, Mr. Pickwick being carried before Mr. Nupkins the magistrate at Ipswich. The figures are all in a state of excited action, and have the characteristic appearance of a crowd having come together fortuitously, and not as if they had been arranged for the purpose by a good stage-manager. But the arrangement is actually very artificial. The eye is carried upward to Mr. Pickwick, who is addressing the mob from the open top of his sedan chair. It is then carried farther by the quaint gables of the house in the background, so that the upper edge of the crowd does not abruptly cut the sky. We notice that the sedan chair is of very considerable proportions, in fact it assumes the dignity of a tower. It illustrates a characteristic that stuck to Browne throughout his life of making his accessories fit the picture, instead of treating them realistically.

As to the mob of the Eatanswill election, or rather two mobs, for the one is on the hustings, the other below on the ground. Both groups exhibit great excitement, and though the individual figures are

easily made out, the whole masses together and joins with the fabric of the hustings to make a harmonious composition.

In *Nicholas Nickleby* we find very slight change in the style of work. The draughtsmanship and technique and comic power remain practically on the same level. The extraordinary power of composition is still fully displayed, though there are no great crowds, except in the three plates concerning Dotheboys Hall, first, where Mrs. Squeers is administering brimstone and treacle, secondly, the castigation of Squeers by Nicholas, and thirdly, the breaking up of Dotheboys Hall. In all these the crowds have the appearance of an artless and confused jumble of boys, but on examination the actions of particular boys can be made out, and the whole group is found to fit into its place to the best pictorial advantage. The other subjects only include a few figures, but they are invariably grouped, so that if taken in conjunction with the background they fill the space to the best advantage. As in the former book, there are glimpses of landscape and architecture, ancient churches, big rooms, decorations always harmonising with and adding to the value of the groups. When a place is squalid, like Mrs. Nickleby's lodging, its character is frankly accepted, and no attempt is made to give it a

pictorial character. An unabated comic power is shown in dealing with the Mantalinis, especially in one plate showing Mr. Mantalini, clad in flamboyant garments, chaffering with the broker's man in possession, in the midst of a number of dressmaker's stands, and in our last glimpse of him turning a mangle for an irate lady who has no pretence to fashion. In all the pictures he is as amusing as in the text.

We have also in this book the first example of a beautiful object being made the centre of the picture in the fainting figure of Madeline Bray, on the morning of her projected marriage to Arthur Gride.

It is worthy of remark that here, as in *Pickwick*, an improvement in academic draughtsmanship would have been of no value in the production of these illustrations. They were the product of the artist's imagination, showing the author's intention as a whole, and not allowing any correction from the visible world to compete with or disturb the realised image. The resulting sketch was an effort to give prominence to these figments of the imagination, and the public seemed fully prepared to accept these suggestions. The absurdity of Mr. Mantalini seen in the shop window was accepted as a promise to pay in the text when it was read at home.

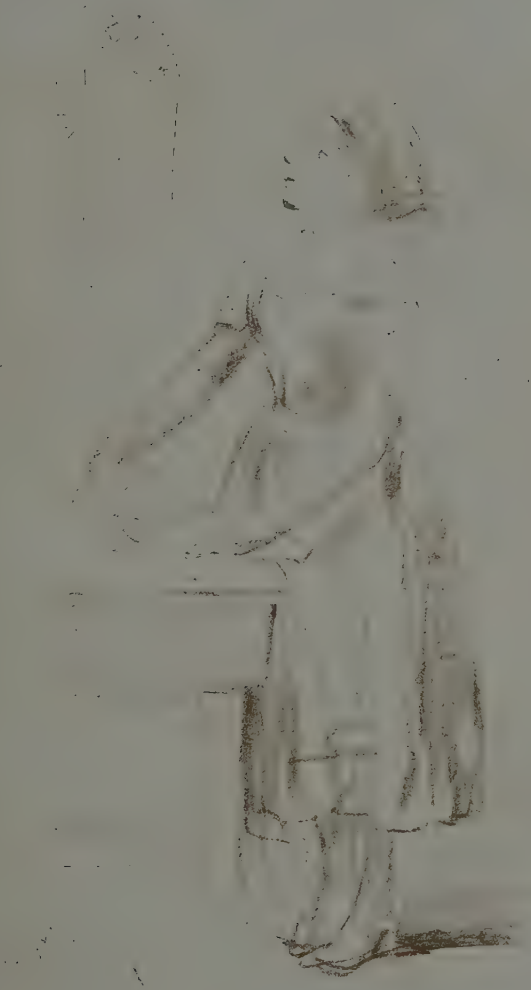
The realistic view of art, the record of visual

impressions, did not exist, or, if it did, was confined to the select few who had trained themselves by the study of the old masters. What the man in the street wanted was a joke which he could understand in a drawing or a paragraph, and with Browne and Dickens in conjunction he got what he desired from both.

In these two books, if we except Dotheboys Hall, which has a social purpose, and is merely an episode, we have dealt entirely with caricature and eccentricity, and with these two books we come to the end of unadulterated jocosity.

"Master Humphrey's Clock"

The next venture was a weekly periodical concerning some old characters, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Weller and Sam, and some new ones, Master Humphrey, Mr. Mills, and one who is only mentioned as the deaf gentleman. These arrange to meet one night every week as the clock strikes ten, and to separate when the clock strikes two. They meet to read manuscripts, which had been deposited at the bottom of Master Humphrey's clock case. The narratives, though published in weekly fragments, were intended to be complete novels, and two of these manuscripts were published as complete stories under the titles respectively of



THE MARCHIONESS, "OLD CURIOSITY SHOP."

Sketch on letter paper.

The Old Curiosity Shop and *Barnaby Rudge*. The clumsy machinery for providing a link between a number of stories was found to be unpopular with readers and irksome to the author, and the publications were discontinued on the completion of *Barnaby Rudge*, the second story.

The illustrations were executed on wood, as was the common practice for cheap publications, on account of the convenience of being able to print the letterpress and drawings simultaneously at the same press. Cattermole, an excellent water-colour painter, was chosen as co-illustrator, and the name "Phiz" was dropped, and Hablot K. Browne for the first time appeared under his own name as an original illustrator. He was thought by some astute judges to be better than Phiz, though it was admitted by all that the style was somewhat similar.

I have mentioned in an earlier part of the book that Browne was never so successful on wood as on steel. He really drew better with a lead pencil than with any other material, but the charm of these drawings depended principally on the subtlety with which he modified a tone by varying his pressure from hard to soft, or in width, according as he varied from the use of the point to the side of his black lead. In drawing on wood he was obliged to use a very hard pencil, and to depend on the

point alone, so that his work resembled a coarse kind of etching, and very often had to suffer from translation at the hands of the engraver, who substituted for a lively line a mechanical one, and treated spaces of shade by cutting in tint. To the end his work on wood suffered from these drawbacks, and he lost greatly in translation, as Dickens himself does when translated into French. Dickens, I may here add, appears as an excellent writer in French, but differing exceedingly from the author with whom we are familiar.

Browne's style as an illustrator was not much altered. He still conceived it his duty or his pleasure to give the full value to the fantastic and grotesque elements. In the opening work, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, he fastened securely on the real hero, Quilp. He succeeded in producing a visible embodiment of the little brute. Quilp was a dwarf, and, according to popular superstition, was supposed to be endowed with malicious qualities. He was malignant, vicious, reckless, cruel; he had a selfish, alert mind, and great bodily activity and strength. The drawings are not caricatures, as might be supposed without reference to the text, but represented the monstrosity of the creature. The remarkable thing is that there has been no fumbling. He is represented exactly as he lived. His appalling

THE MARCHIONESS.

Extra illustration to "The Old Curiosity Shop," published by H. K. Browne and Robert Young.

vitality where he is seated on his desk perplexed by a letter brought by little Nell; or squinting out of his hammock at his terrified little wife; or with undaunted courage infuriating a dog just outside of the limit of his chain; or torturing Sampson Brass; or looking out of the window bursting with malignant glee as Kit is taken to prison—he is always alive, full of exuberant energy, till at the end we see him lying, a hideous corpse, in the slimy ooze of the river, in the pallid twilight of the dawn.

All the other characters fade into insignificance beside the robust personality of Quilp. But Sampson and Sally Brass are caricatured with a harsh hand. Author and illustrator alike intended them to appear loathsome without any redeeming trait, and horror indeed prevails throughout the whole book. In Brass's office at Bevis Marks, at Quilp's wharf, Swiveller's lodging, all is dismal and dirty. Browne had no option but to make them appear so, contrary to his usual custom. The travelling showmen gave an opportunity for a little wholesome grotesque. The drawings of Codlin and Short mending their puppets in the churchyard, and Mrs. Jarley drinking tea, are wholesome and pleasant to look upon, and one or two opportunities of sketching pleasant little landscapes have been seized upon.

The second book to appear in the series of Master Humphrey's Clock was *Barnaby Rudge*, in which perhaps the reader may trace the influence of Ainsworth in the selection of crime for the human subject, and the influence of Scott combining it with a historical episode in which the characters could play their parts. In the beginning of the book we come upon a murder which in a very short time appears a mere peccadillo. There is hardly a decent character in the book. The most respectable are the Varden family. The head of the household is Gabriel Varden, an honest blacksmith, henpecked by his shrewish wife, egged on by her sycophantic ally, Miggs, and their daughter Dolly, a shallow, heartless coquette, and an apprentice, Simon Tappertit, a burlesque conspirator, who is of folly all compounded, and involved in crimes of which he cannot see the enormity.

At the far-famed country inn, The Maypole at Chigwell, the landlord, old John Willett, is a wooden-headed fool, his son John a booby, his ostler Hugh a ruffian. These are the people for whom our interest is claimed, for Mr. and Mrs. Harewood, who are honest, are creatures of straw. On the historical side we come upon Lord George Gordon, a fanatic who works on the bad passions of an ignorant mob by appealing to their fears and inherited hatred of

MIGGS.

As printed in the text of "Barnaby Rudge."

Popery to commit arson and deeds of violence; Gashford, an imitation fanatic; and Dennis, the common hangman; finally, we have the hero, Barnaby Rudge, a harmless lunatic; his weak-witted mother and her husband, a skulking murderer hiding from justice. That there are some amusing passages in the book cannot be denied, but they lack the spontaneity of the preceding books, and the prevailing impression is one of dismal and motiveless crime.

In the midst of this crowd the only creature who is really amusing is Barnaby's pet raven, Grip. Dickens' description of the riots are among the best of the kind that he or anyone else ever penned. Browne as usual managed his crowds with force and skill, notably on three occasions, one where the rioters have surged into a street, and are throwing furniture out of the windows, and are piling the fragments in heaps and burning everything, including ornaments pillaged from the churches. Another, where the mob in front of Newgate have brought Varden by force to pick the lock of the prison: though they threaten him, and he is within an ace of dying a violent death, the old man stands firm and defies them, a very noble and resolute figure. A third, where they have beaten in some barrels of wine, which is flowing

over the street and running down the kennel so that the mob drink to intoxication.

The reader will notice that Cattermole was hampered by the technique of wood engraving. As a water-colour artist his style was characterised by great breadth. In these books the architectural subjects for which he had been specially engaged though picturesque, are scratchy and colourless. A few drawings which have been carefully finished are without interest. His representations of Quilp have no life in them. They make him appear like a stuffed figure incapable of movement. Regarding the illustrations as material for observing the development of Browne, there is nothing giving any indication of progress except the interpolation of pleasant little rural landscapes.

Dickens brought Master Humphrey's Clock to a conclusion in November 1841, and in his address to the reader he wrote, "On the 1st November 1842 I purpose, if it please God, to commence my new book in monthly parts, under the old green cover and the old size and form, and at the old price," and in fulfilment of this promise *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared accordingly. But apparently the first number was delayed till January 1843.

MIGGS AND MRS. VARDEN.

Extra illustration to "Barnaby Rudge," published by H. K. Browne and Robert Young.

"Martin Chuzzlewit"

Dickens had passed a considerable portion of the interval in America, and had taken a holiday from sustained literary composition for more than a year. He was therefore mentally very fresh and vigorous, and it is not surprising that the new book was one of the most brilliantly written of the whole series. For those of us who know it only as a completed work the book may be almost divided into three volumes, one of which is concerned with Pecksniff; another with America, where Martin is merely a spectator of the American, and a vehicle for many of Dickens' own opinions, formed during his own holiday in the United States; and a third is concerned with the sayings and doings of Mrs. Gamp. Even experienced readers of Dickens, accustomed to his extraordinary digressions, must be startled at the intrusion of the American piece between two such excellent morsels as the first and third parts. But we must remember that during its composition he never took the completed book sufficiently into consideration, but always worked with reference to the number immediately in hand. He regarded each part as being self-contained, and like a magazine, carrying sufficient interesting matter to be attractive to the buyer.

When it was discovered that the public were not

rushing to buy with their former eagerness, Dickens introduced some of his American experiences to stimulate interest and curiosity. Possibly they succeeded in so doing, though I suspect that the increased sale which followed their introduction was more probably due to Pecksniff becoming more widely known, and, from a literary point of view, more highly esteemed. It is impossible to conceive a public already acquainted with Dickens' writing, and therefore fully possessed with a sense of humour, not to have been highly delighted with Pecksniff and M. Todgers. Dickens was always unduly captious about his crumpled rose-leaf, and unduly ambitious in regard to quick monetary returns. He doubtless expected the public would rush at him after his long absence, forgetting that enthusiasm requires some little time to be aroused.

Whatever may have been thought by contemporaries, the American portions are felt as unwelcome intrusion in the completed book, if for no other reason than that they distract our attention, and delay our acquaintanceship with Mrs. Gamp.

Undoubtedly the American chapters gave great offence to the United States. The American, less versed than ourselves in Dickens' methods, did not understand that it was his ingrained custom to produce a literary effect by the description of oddities,

monstrosities and scoundrels, and that he generally overstated his case. Added to this, his visit was so recent, that the observations put into the mouth of Martin were regarded as his own personal convictions. He must certainly have seen more of the shady side of America than might have been expected, and he was undeniably annoyed by some circumstances of his reception.

But he certainly cannot have intended to imply that America had a monopoly of scoundrelism. Without counting the disreputable personages in his last two books, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*, we find side by side in the pages of *Martin Chuzzlewit* Mr. Scadder and Montague Tigg, not to mention Jonas—certainly America could not have produced anything worse—and the Anglo-Bengalee may be considered on the same plane as the City of Eden. But undoubtedly at the time much soreness was seriously felt, and journals professing to represent national opinion, bespattered Dickens with abuse, and indulged in stories and inventions—inventions with not the slightest foundation in fact—concerning what would be in any other country his private life. No garbage was too filthy to be handled, no scandal was too gross to be printed, if only there was a chance of wounding feelings or injuring reputation. Dickens had certainly not

handled the gutter-press gently, and he had not exercised any discrimination or selection in his text. He had not even allowed the existence of one just man who might have saved the country. The gutter-press were out for revenge, and they pounced like wild beasts. The general tone of journalism is amusingly satirised by Bon Gaultier in a ballad professing to embody the American opinion of Dickens.

"The American's Apostrophe to 'Boz.'

"We received thee warmly—kindly—though we knew thou wert a quiz,
Partly for thyself it may be, chiefly for the sake of Phiz,
Much we bore and much we suffered, listening to remorseless spells
Of that Smike's unceasing drivellings, and those everlasting Nells."

The temporary irritation soon subsided, and only the literary error is permanent. In the United States are to be found some of his most enthusiastic admirers, and on his second visit for the purpose of giving public readings, his reception was overwhelming. Truly indeed it may be said, it is a good thing to begin with a little aversion.

The change in the author's style from the extravagantly comic or melodramatic to one more subdued, though indeed eloquent in dealing with the

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT IN BED AT THE BLUE DRAGON.

ordinary affairs of life, tempted Browne to appear in his true character. We find at once that a profound change has taken place in the illustrations; the drawing is immensely improved, and beauty, which had only been furtively shown, is now openly displayed. Humour is more delicate, and is only employed to impart the cheerful interest which is necessary to represent the author. The picturesque may be said to take the leading position, and in the midst of well-arranged objects forming a pictorial composition the characters take their natural place.

We find a tendency, which afterwards became habitual, to impart a certain dignified aspect to common objects. We note in the first picture of old Martin in bed at the Dragon that the curtains have a fulness and dignity more likely to be seen in the chambers of Louis XIV than in a country inn. The buxom form of Mrs. Lupin and the elegant figure of Mary Graham strike a new note. We start at once with style and dignity. We notice that the drawing is firm, the handling free; all signs of immaturity have vanished.

In the second picture we see the character who has become part of our national literature, and whose name has provided our language with adjectives and epithets in general use. We see the real hero of the book, the moral Pecksniff, in the bosom of

his family. It might well have been doubted whether the character which rests so entirely on punctilious and hypocritical expressions and an affectation of unselfish piety could have been pictorially represented. He appealed to the ear—could he be made to appeal to the eye? Undoubtedly Browne's picture—grotesque, but not too grotesque—serves its purpose. As a portrait, it bears the impression of being a personal likeness to Dickens' character—it might have been sketched from life, if there had been anything to sketch from. Had he been too seriously considered he might have produced the impression of a solemnity and piety that were genuine and not spurious, a mistake that would have been fatal. But here, though treated with a gentle hand, with just a spice of exaggeration, he proclaims the humbug as effectually as if he wore a placard. Contrary to his usual custom, Dickens introduced Pecksniff without a full description of his outward appearance and costume. When we first hear of him he is knocked down by his own street door, and when the description is afterwards taken in hand, so much emphasis is laid on the moral significance of the different articles of his clothing, to the neglect of their texture, that it is by no means easy to form an idea of his appearance. Browne therefore had something of a free hand, and evolved

from his imagination a personage of remarkable individuality, who once seen is never forgotten. He substituted a black cravat in place of the white, which is the most definitely described article of attire in the text. Barnard pointed out to me that this substitution was advantageous in the etching, as it enhanced the visibility of the open throat. Black was of course suitable for piety and for Pecksniff as a widower, and was really intended to mark the dress from the attire of the worldly, who were accustomed to swathe the throat in a satin stock, which fell in ample folds over the chest, and was secured by pins of price. If the description had been carefully followed, the result would have been a mild-looking person with just a suspicion of clericalism in his attire, of an aspect of too little bodily exercise and the frequent indulgence in muffins, of too much speaking and too little doing. A close adherence to the specification might have pleased the costumier, but would not have corresponded with the general trend of the character as revealed in the body of the text. Pecksniff was not one of those laymen who hang about the vestry and ape the manners of some popular clergyman. He is not doleful or lugubrious. He is intellectually alert, of infinite resource, and unfailingly witty.

Nothing is more admirable than the delicacy

with which Dickens has avoided the stock phrases of the profoundly pious, and avoided the introduction of sacred names and persons which must have figured in a realistic description. Pecksniff is not at all like a clergyman, and it was in the highest degree important that no reflection should seem to be cast upon the cloth. He is not to be taken too seriously, for he is a humorist, and many subtle phrases show that he passes his goods out with the air of a cheerful giver. He is a light-hearted humbug, and must be shown to have no connection with real piety and genuine morality, which might have seemed implied if he had resembled a clergyman in appearance. Therefore he is rightly represented and unmistakable. As it is he would have suited any profession; he might have been in any profession in which extreme respectability and super-probity might be desirable. He filled the position with his triple-peaked hair, his huge chops and open throat, and the middle-aged rotundity of his waistcoat.

No one looking at the drawing of Mr. Pecksniff, as he sits in front of the fire surrounded by his architectural designs, faced by his portrait, and supported by his two daughters, but is convinced that he beholds the pious Mr. Pecksniff and no other. There are no less than ten illustrations with Mr. Pecksniff playing the principal part. We see him in his

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

The moral Pecksniff in the bosom of his family.

triumphs, and we see him in his ignominious defeat. The character in the whole series is admirably sustained.

Perhaps Mr. Pecksniff is seen at his very best when, a perfect emblem of gentle resignation, he goes to summon Mrs. Gamp. He is then surrounded by matrons, who press upon him with offers of assistance in the belief that he is an expectant father. The mean little fronts of Poll Sweedlepipe's and the mutton-pie shop form the background, and identify Mrs. Gamp's residence. In the midst of the slatterns we see one good-looking woman slightly redeeming the prevailing ugliness.

Browne evidently worked from his imagination, founded upon Dickens' description of which certain bits suited his purpose and were fitted in, and I feel certain he did not know who was the reputed original. Even if he did, he would not have taken any feature from him, as his dislike to personality was extreme; in fact he refused to join the staff of *Punch* because he believed the paper was to be personal.

Although Mr. Pecksniff's visit to Kingsgate Street was not on account of a birth (to the disgust of the assembled matrons), it did accomplish the introduction of his only rival in the book—Mrs. Gamp. She is probably the most universally popular char-

acter in the crowded groups of Dickens. Her name has clung to the ladies of her profession, and has become the accepted and convenient synonym for an umbrella. Mrs. Gamp has a vocabulary of her own, and an extraordinary way of perverting the English language, but she has in addition a scheme of philosophy and proverbial wisdom suited to all occasions, such as is to be found in vulgar persons who are placed from time to time in positions of brief authority. Fully to comprehend the genius of Mrs. Gamp it will be found instructive to read her in French, when she becomes frankly a philosopher on life and does not even raise a smile, and though vastly instructive, is comparatively dull. Her sometime "pardner," Betsy Prig, is but a pale shadow of her personality, and if she had not been, when primed with liquor, capable of doubting the existence of Mrs. Harris, she might have escaped immortality. As it is, she provokes the quarrel, which is reckoned among the decisive battles of the world.

Mrs. Gamp is a great literary triumph and vindication of the Dickensian method. In reality she is a mean, grasping, drunken, cruel, detestable old woman, but by the tender treatment of her humorous aspects she becomes infinitely amusing, and almost succeeds in putting Pecksniff in the shade.

But between them they share the honours of the latter part of the book. It is quite incomprehensible how Dickens, with two such first-class performers on the stage, should have wasted time on the murder by Jonas. What time have we for trivial crime, when we might have had more imperishable remarks on the last moments of Gamp and the ultimate fate of his wooden leg, which in the nature of things could not have been dissected ?

The illustrator has also dealt lightly with her. She is certainly no beauty, and if she looks a little bunchy, she is nevertheless clean and tidy, and has an air of thinking herself welcome. She has an eye to the main chance, and was ready to welcome the newly married bride with her professional card, a smile and a leer, which though a little bit vulgar has no harm in it, and merely implies that she, being a person of great skill and remarkable penetration, is in possession of a little secret as yet unknown to the outer world. She has the aspect rather of a cheerful humorist who, having no sign of being a teetotaler, is not a drunkard. In the etching representing her entertaining Mrs. Prig to tea she is represented as a social and hospitable person, as no doubt she was on occasions. The two figures, in themselves admirably drawn and full of individual character, are as well composed with the back-

ground and accessories of Mrs. Gamp's furniture, as if they were portraits of two great ladies in a palace. The women themselves and their surroundings are individually mean, but they are managed with the same artistic skill that would have served for a big picture. When a close examination is made of details the effect is very droll and laughable, and may be accounted as a splendid example of the highest kind of burlesque.

The illustrations throughout the book reach a high order of excellence, but a special word of commendation should be reserved for the charming frontispiece, representing Tom Pinch playing the organ and surrounded by a sort of dream of persons and incidents in the book. The figures are small but perfectly defined, and in number considerably over seventy; they are so grouped as to form an agreeable decorative pattern.

"Dombey"

Though the next book, *Dombey*, has already been referred to, it is necessary to give some description of its character in connection with the illustrations and Browne's development. The book as a whole is dismal and is not a popular favourite, yet it has afforded opportunities for illustrations in abundance. The remarkable advance shown by Browne in

LITTLE PAUL.

Extra illustration to "Dombey"—not actually used.

Chuzzlewit might have been considered a definite stage in which he had shown his utmost capacity, but he was by no means as yet stationary.

Dickens' original design was excellent and ambitious, being nothing less than to draw a picture of a man inordinately proud and vain of his position abased and humbled by an unkind fate. When little Paul is born Dombey is greatly rejoiced, because in due time there will be a son in the firm, as there has been for three generations. That Mrs. Dombey dies is a matter of little moment. Dombey concentrates his whole mind on the upbringing of his son; because he is a delicate child, he is placed at Brighton with Mrs. Pipchin; and as he is backward, he is put in the hands of Dr. Blimber in order to fit him for his right position. As we have said, the book as a whole is dismal, it is abruptly divided into two parts by the death of little Paul, which, according to the original intention, was to have formed the first great blow to Mr. Dombey's overweening pride. But unfortunately all our interest has been centred on the old-fashioned little boy, and Mr. Dombey and his pride could only have attracted our attention by a psychological portraiture which was quite outside the Dickens range. We read a good deal about Mr. Dombey's pride, but we only get evidence that he is stiff and unpleasant;

he seems to be rather callous than suffering. Failing the central figure, the story is eked out with a number of oddities, who, however, seem to move uneasily in an uncongenial atmosphere. We have the Major, a curry-eating, wine-bibbing, bragging returned Indian and his native manservant; Captain Cuttle with his hook and his innocence of the ways of dry land, not to mention his friend Bunsby, or his landlady, Mrs. MacStinger, one of Dickens' notable and terrifying women, or Sol Gills, a muddle-headed old seller of nautical instruments. All these are definite characters, who lend themselves for illustration.

Dombey has no great central figure overpowering all the other characters, but, unlike the other books, there are an unusual number of female characters in it, which would not have suited most caricaturists, but were particularly suitable for Browne. As usual we have some ladies who lend themselves to caricature, notably Mrs. Chick, Miss Tox, and afterwards Mrs. Skewton. But Mrs. Toodles *alias* Richards, Miss Nipper, Florence herself as she grows up, Alice, and the second Mrs. Dombey, are all beautiful in different styles, and require to be represented by a draughtsman who could afford to sacrifice a good deal for the sake of grace.

In the former books we remember some grotesque

ALICE.

Reduced one of a series of extra illustrations to "Dombey," published by Hablot Browne and Robert Young

figures in prominent scenes which colour our recollections, but here the pictures which remain most firmly impressed on the memory are those imbued with a strong sense of beauty and owing nothing to the comic element. Especially we remember the meeting of Florence and Edith on the staircase, and that of Mrs. Dombey denouncing Carker. Here the woman is not in a position to show to the greatest advantage; she has been insulted, she is in a towering passion, full of contempt and loathing for her companion, and bitter with the bitterness of a proud woman who has been disrespectfully treated. Energetic action and bad feeling assert ill with beauty, but here they go together to make the most impressive picture.

The villain, Carker, though he is a very active schemer, is quite uninteresting in the letterpress and the etchings. A number of minor characters out of the inexhaustible Dickens' miscellany serve to fill up odd corners, and bustle on the stage in the final tableau.

Although Browne's appreciation of the book was evidently lessened by the absence of any striking central figure suitable for his purpose, he shows every sign of enjoyment by the general excellence and completeness of the drawings; in addition to those appearing in the monthly numbers, he pro-

duced a number of extra single portraits, which were engraved by Robert Young. These all show a great sense of beauty, but none quite equal to the etching of Mrs. Dombey, already described.

"David Copperfield"

We now come to *David Copperfield*, the most popular of all the books, not only on account of its own merits, which are great, but because it is supposed to be autobiographical, though it actually is so only to a small extent. Indeed, a parallelism can only be drawn in one circumstance common to the two lives. Dickens in his boyhood was for a time actually employed in a blacking warehouse pasting labels on bottles, and David is described as beginning life in the same kind of occupation. Dickens confessedly felt the degradation acutely, so profoundly indeed that years afterwards he dare not pass the spot on the same side of the road; and David felt the misery of his position, and suffered acutely, with an inexpressible agony of soul from the thought of the hopelessness of his future life, and his detestation of his present associates. Otherwise there was little resemblance between the real and the counterfeit. As regards all other incidents the two lives diverge, though it is not improbable that Dickens derived help from the recollection of his own experiences

in describing David's upgrowing, as we know he did in the story of little Paul Dombey. The autobiographical theory is strengthened by the avowal that Micawber's cheery optimism was modelled from traits in the character of Dickens' own father.

David was born and brought up in the country. At the beginning of the book his father is dead, and the young widow is living with her little son and Clara Peggotty at the Rookery, Blunderstone, Suffolk. All was going well, when Mr. Murdstone, a bold bad man with black whiskers, fell in love with the widow. Not only did he hang up his hat in her hall, but imported his sister, a hard dour woman. David is taken out of the way, and stays with Mr. Peggotty, Ham, little Emily, and Mrs. Gummidge. Mr. Peggotty lives in a house made out of a boat. Some little controversy has taken place whether the boat was propped up on its keel or turned right over. As it is represented in the latter position, and as Dickens was exceedingly particular at this time about the facts of his illustrations being correct, we may take it for granted it was so. I myself have seen on the south coast and other places houses contrived from boats in both ways, and smaller kinds of smacks sawn in half and set up on end as storerooms for nets and tackle.

We hear a good deal about the doings of these

simple people, and make the acquaintance of one of the immortals, Mr. Barkis, the Blunderstone carrier, all described delightfully in Dickens' fully developed style.

This happy period ends, and is followed by a picture of a child uncomprehended and badly treated. His severe and narrow-minded stepfather [1] endeavours to flog virtue into him, and in a tussle David bites him. In reprisal he is sent off to a school in London kept by one Creakle, who is aided and abetted in his cruelties and floggings by a wooden-legged myrmidon. To add to the child's misery, he is made to wear a placard inscribed "Take care of him, he bites." Here David meets with his evil genius, Steerforth, a flashy, extravagant youth, who lords it over the whole establishment. After a short pretence of education he is sent to take up employment in the bottle warehouse. As it is necessary for him to have a lodging, a person is found who is willing to take him for a consideration. This gentleman is the real hero of the book, one of the greatest of Dickens' characters, and is known all over the civilised world as Mr. Micawber. He is a genuine grotesque, very theatrical, yet very human. In real

[1] Dickens speaks of Murdstone as David's "father-in-law," thus falling into the same error as he did in describing Mrs. Tony Weller's relationship to Sam.

life we suspect Mr. Micawber would have disappeared into the debtors' prison at an early date and remained there, but in the novel David cannot go far without his friend turning up, from which we may gather, in spite of the unfavourable view taken by Mrs. Micawber of Mr. Micawber's family, they *did* come forward better than we were given to understand.

Overcome by the miserable sense of his degradation, David makes up his mind to run away and go down to Dover to see and appeal to his aunt, Miss Trotwood, on the capital of a half sovereign borrowed from Peggotty. He is robbed at the start, and had to travel without it. After a toilsome walk, wonderfully related, he finds his relation, who is one of the best described characters in any of the books. She is brusque and abrupt and very autocratic, but very tender-hearted. She holds in detestation mankind in general, and donkeys who trespass on her green in particular. She has living with her "Mr. Dick," a harmless lunatic, who is perpetually endeavouring, without success, to complete a memorial without mentioning King Charles the First's head.

David is adopted by his aunt and put to school with Dr. Strong at Canterbury, where he becomes acquainted with his aunt's lawyer, Mr. Wickfield,

his daughter Agnes, and his clerk, Uriah Heap, who wriggles his way up in life by professing to be 'umble. Afterwards David goes to London, and the story oscillates between London and Yarmouth. At the latter place things go badly. Emily is seduced by Steerforth, and she flees from her home to escape ignominy. Her uncle, who loves her deeply, sets forth in search of her.

David is married to Dora Spenlow, a childish little butterfly of a woman, who dies. David having to go to Yarmouth encounters a violent storm, which is magnificently described. Steerforth is wrecked close by the home he had wronged, and Ham loses his life in an attempt at rescue. The book ends by Mr. Micawber discovering a series of crimes committed by Uriah Heap, and denouncing him. In the ending, as usual, everybody is made more or less happy.

Early on in the book is one of those compositions of figures and architecture which were always characteristic of Browne's style, but now boldly and openly treated. The scene is in the interior of the parish church. The walls are crowded with monuments and memorial tablets, mingling the dead with the living. Among the congregation we easily distinguish Mr. Murdstone, who, forgetting the service, is staring fixedly at the widow. The archi-

tecture is not strictly according to the rules of any style in particular, but an excellent impression of a general view of Croydon Church. There is a very pretty picture when David returns home and finds his mother nursing a baby. The composition is altogether charming and human. The group of the mother and child could scarcely be excelled for the beauty of a pose which is quite natural and effectively harmonised with the lines of the background. This is a favourite subject with Browne. He drew it many hundreds of times in oils, water-colours, chalk, pencil, so that it was ready to be used as an illustration. There is no special description of it in the text.

Two illustrations connected with David's early life are noteworthy: one, where he is at table with the voracious waiter, who tricks him out of his meal by subterfuges; the other, where he gives his "magnificent order" at the public house. He is standing, a rather forlorn, but gentlemanly little figure, in a little white hat with a black hatband, at the bar of the public house, from which all commonness and meanness has been omitted and transformed to a certain grandeur and dignity. Two enormous and princely puncheons and other splendid vessels containing liquor are scattered about. The landlord and landlady present the appearance of

the greatest comfort and respectability. All this is as far from realism as it can be, but few can help feeling that it is more interesting and wholesome than an exact representation of a London public house. Throughout ugliness is kept in the background, and things are made perhaps a little better than they are. In the crowded schoolroom at Creakle's, for instance, the boys appear high-spirited and well dressed, and not at all depressed by Mr. Creakle and his wooden-legged myrmidon.

In the picture where Mr. Mell visits his toothless old mother and plays the flute there is no sign of squalor, and a pleasant composition is made out of most unpromising material.

At the end of his toilsome journey to Dover David presents himself to his aunt, who is engaged in gardening; and when he tells her who he is, she is so astonished, that she exclaims "Good God!" and forthwith sits down upon the path. This in a written description is expressive of amazement. But the picture of a respectable spinster lady sitting on a gravel path conveys no idea of astonishment and pictorially is ineffective, and Browne feeling this, made an alternative design of her standing bolt upright and looking thoroughly taken aback. This was

the one actually etched, and is one of the best in the book.[1]

Afterwards, in another drawing, David is shown bundled up in a suit of clothes belonging to Mr. Dick, at the time when the Murdstones come down to make terms, and is a sufficiently comical little figure.

Throughout the book there is not the slightest attempt to force the picturesque element into the front, or to step beyond the modesty of ordinary life. Even Mr. Micawber, extravagant as he is, is made to harmonise with his surroundings, and his variations of costume from the prevailing fashion does not seem greater than would be permissible in a man of eccentric taste and genius. It is only fair to him to remark that there was enormously greater latitude in male costume both as regards cut and colour than there is at the present day. Dickens was delighted with this portrait. He writes: "Browne has done a capital Micawber."

The figure is indeed a triumph. He embodies the author's idea. He is grotesque and yet human, and though an amusing caricature, is quite credible

[1] Excellent reproductions of the alternative designs in pencil, together with the etching actually published, which is considerably superior to both, are given by Mr. D. C. Thompson in his *Life of Hablot K. Browne*.

as the real author of his tremendous epistles and sententious maxims.

The drawing where Miss Mowcher is standing on a table doctoring Steerforth's hair and chattering to David might very probably be classed a caricature, but as I knew the lady, I am in a position to state that nothing is exaggerated, and the drawing taken from the description gives a very good general impression of her as she lived, though, as I have said, I do not think my father ever saw her in the flesh.

The illustrations of the happenings of common life, such as the first introduction to Dora, and the interview with the Misses Spenlow, who certainly resemble little birds, Littimer and Uriah Heap in prison, all fulfil their purpose of telling the story. The frontispiece representing Miss Betsy Trotwood peeping in at the window of the Rookery, and the vignette title-page representing little Emily sitting on the beach near Peggotty's boat-house, are delightful examples of Browne's skill and fancy in delineating landscape in relation to figures.

"Bleak House"

The next book, *Bleak House*, differs from its predecessors in being something of a detective story, and having as central figures, round whom the interest revolves, people of good social position.

From the beginning we are plunged into a legal atmosphere, or let us say a legal fog enveloping a Chancery suit, with its interminable delays, its devouring expenses, and its attendant crowd of legal persons, clients and witnesses ; there is a continual rummage among every variety of documents, wills, judgments, affidavits and parchments of all sorts and descriptions, so that there is always the chance of some secret being brought unexpectedly to light. And a secret there is, which involves a person apparently unconnected with the suit, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Bart., a great landowner and Dickens' most successful portrait of a gentleman, of no particular brains, prejudiced, courteous, and soaked in the honourable traditions of his caste. He has married a lady, beautiful, haughty, disdainful, and bored with the monotony of fashionable life.

The family solicitor, Mr. Tulkinghorn, and a ridiculous little lawyer's clerk named Guppy, discover that Lady Dedlock before her marriage to Sir Leicester Dedlock had a lover, Captain Hawdon, by whom she had a child, Esther Summerson, who is actually living as a member of the family of their neighbour, Mr. Jarndyce, one of the chief persons in the great suit. It is further discovered that Hawdon is identical with a law copyist, who has been eking out a miserable existence by writing

documents for Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer. Hawdon dies by an overdose of opium. Mr. Tulkinghorn having discovered the secret of Hawdon's life uses his knowledge for the purpose of terrorising Lady Dedlock. Among witnesses called at the inquest—described in Dickens' usual cheerful manner in dealing with the backstreet incidents—is a miserable crossing-sweeper named Jo, to whom the deceased man had rendered occasional acts of kindness. About this time Lady Dedlock confesses to Esther Summerson that they are related as mother and daughter, and one evening, disguised in her servant's clothes (Sir Leicester being laid up with the gout), she employs Jo to guide her to places connected with Hawdon's miserable life, and to point out his grave. The secret might have been indefinitely preserved from other people if Mr. Tulkinghorn had not thought proper to put the screw on. Lady Dedlock flies her home, Chesney Wold, and after a search is found dead and cold at the gateway of the burial-ground.

Shortly before this Mr. Tulkinghorn was found shot in his own room, and the remainder of the story is chiefly occupied with the doings of Mr. Bucket, the detective who finally arrests Hortense, Lady Dedlock's French maid, for the murder.

Besides Skimpole and Mr. Guppy already mentioned, there is a whole crowd of miscellaneous

characters good enough to have made the fortune of any other writer, who are only part of that inexhaustible stock Dickens always had on hand. Apart from those who conduct themselves as ordinary commonplace mortals, we have Miss Flite, a little mad woman who frequents the court, and a dirty old lunatic Krook, who keeps a marine store, and calls himself Lord Chancellor. Mr. Boythorn, a man outwardly ferocious, but inwardly kind-hearted, supposed to have been modelled on Walter Savage Landor (and fortunately without the addition of disagreeable traits). Two excellent portraits of philanthropic ladies: Mrs. Jellyby, occupied with the affairs of Borrioboola Gha, and Mrs. Pardiggle, who made house to house visitation amongst the poor, and bullied them into cleanliness and godliness. Mr. Turveydrop, a survival of the dandies of the time of George IV; his son Prince, a dancing-master, whose academy is most amusingly described. Mr. Bagnet, a retired trooper, with his wife, literally his better half, and children, Quebec and Malta; and the keeper of a shooting-gallery, also a retired trooper, Mr. George, who is mistakenly arrested by Mr. Bucket for the murder. Nor must we omit Mrs. Snagsby, a jealous woman who bullies her husband, and sits under Mr. Chadband, a preaching old humbug, perfectly distinct from his popular

predecessor Stiggins. Finally there is a full-length portrait of the poor castaway " Jo," his miserable life and condition. His death has in it a true pathos, a little weakened by Dickens insisting upon drawing the attention of " My Lords and Gentlemen " to it.

As the greater part of the book consists of conversations, all letting the cat out of the bag by very slow degrees, there was an absence of incidents which would serve for illustration, or be helped by one. In the actual matter of composition and execution Browne was never better. The drawings of the female figures are especially graceful, two in particular. One representing Esther talking to Miss Jellyby, Peepy asleep in the mean bed, luggage and bandboxes, the neglected candles, all help in the composition. The other called " Nurse and Patient," equally beautiful. In the old familiar style are pictures which directly illustrate the story, such as the old marine store-dealer Krook, chalking up the name Jarndyce letter by letter. Another where Jo is pointing out to Lady Dedlock through the bars of the gateway the position of Hawdon's grave in the noisome little burial-place, the squalor and obscenity of the place being emphasized by a bestial shadow of a man drinking being thrown on the blind of a low down window.

The picture of Mr. Chadband improving a tough subject makes the old humbug a very distinct personality, and different from the arch-hypocrite forerunner Pecksniff, whom he might be supposed to resemble. Other illustrations there are of the usual character, including the one of Skimpole and Coavinses, which has already been dealt with. But about halfway through the book—to be precise, on the 360th page—the reader cannot fail to be struck by an illustration which possesses two characteristics not hitherto seen. First, it has been executed in tint, and the outline, instead of playing a great part, is barely visible; and secondly, it consists of architecture and landscape, with an entire absence of the human figure—and thereby hangs a tale.

If the reader will compare an etching in *Martin Chuzzlewit*—for example, the celebrated scene where "Mrs. Gamp propoges a toast," or any other group of figures in an interior—with the one in *Bleak House* of "Nurse and Patient," or other similar composition, and look over the etchings bit by bit, he will be struck that in many places in the latter volume the lines are not clear and precise, and in others they have unexpectedly agglomerated so as to form blotches. Comparing the drawings, especially in the fine etching of such a passage as the objects which

form a background to the group of figures which are generally treated by Browne by very delicate lines. In the *Chuzzlewit* drawings we shall notice that the figures are vividly relieved from the background, and the whole drawing errs, if in anything, by being too sharp, but the general effect in the *Bleak House* series is rather that of woolliness and flatness, and a uniformity of greyness, as if the backgrounds had been too strongly bitten in; though that is not the fault. If closely examined, the lines will be seen to be a little thicker than usual, and with a dull edge, as if they were printed on blotting-paper.

Browne was generally incurious about the result of his work, and the completed numbers when forwarded often remained unopened for some days. But he discovered these facts, and he recognised the engraver's unforgivable sin—the rotten line. In every man, even the most careless, there remains some concealed point of pride which brooks no interference. There is generally something in every profession which stands for a point of honour, and is often entirely incomprehensible to outsiders. How he discovered the cause I do not know, but he was evidently much disturbed that he might be supposed to be concerned in the nefarious crime. His drawing might be attacked, he might be

accused of caricature, his perspective might be wrong, his people might be ugly — but a rotten line, never!

The reason for these defective impressions was that, in order to deal rapidly with a large issue, the plates had been printed by means of some kind of lithographic process, which enabled half a dozen to be done at the same time. Now though such processes may be, by means of skill and attention, trusted to produce clean lines, so long as they are isolated, it cannot be trusted to reproduce luminously fine lines closely in juxtaposition. It was very characteristic of the man that he neither whined nor stormed, but as a sort of joke sent up a plate wholly composed of fine parallel lines which were liable to blotch if transferred to stone, and therefore must be printed in a proper copperplate press. This was the Ghosts' Walk. So far from its being regarded as a joke or a reproof, it was received with acclamation, and considered by the publishers and the public as a novelty of a very attractive nature. The drawing in question taken on its own merits is interesting and impressive.

The accompanying two letters, now for the first time printed, fortunately escaped the bonfire, and relate to the terminal numbers of *Bleak House*. One is an ordinary business letter, the other is a

specimen of Anglo-French, and characteristic of the writer :

"Chateau de Moulineux, Rue Beaurepaire,
Boulogne, 29*th June* 1853.

"My dear Browne,—First, I beg to report myself, thank God, thoroughly well again.

"I was truly sensible of your last note, and of the right goodwill with which you fell to work on the plates, under those discouraging circumstances.

"Secondly, I send the subjects for the next number. Will you let me see the sketches here by post ?

"Thirdly, I am now ready with all four subjects for the concluding double number, and will post them to you to-morrow or next day ! ! ! ! ! !

"Fourthly, I wish you would so contrive your arrangements, if so disposed, as to come and pay us a visit here. I don't know whether you know Boulogne well ; but, well known, it is a very capital place, with quite as much that is quaint and picturesque among the fishing people and their quarter of the town as is to be found (if you will believe me in a whisper) at Naples.

"We purpose remaining here until the middle of October ; have a queer doll's house of many rooms, and really beautiful gardens. I think you would like it and be amused, and would find much worthy of note, and afterwards of use, in these parts.

"Now I have it in contemplation, on Monday, 22nd of August, to do the best French dinner that can be done in this region, to celebrate the conclusion of *Bleak House*, to which festival Bradbury and Lemon stand pledged to come over. Can you not, on such good notice, arrange to come with them, and to remain after them, taking for a good week or fortnight of fresh air and change. We shall be truly delighted to receive you.

"Consider, O Man of business, and at your leisure reply.

"Address as above.—Ever faithfully yours,

"CHARLES DICKENS.

"HABLOT K. BROWNE, Esq."

"BOULOGNE, MERCREDAY, *Juil-ly* 6, 1853.

"MON CHER BROWNE,—If I express myself not altogether in the perfect English of your country, pardon me for tout ce que je fait. J'ai si longtemps demeurré—on the Continent—que j'ai presqu'oublié my native tongue.

"My French il me parait with the esquisses seront —admirable when they shall be finished according to your so wondrous pouce of art.

"I them return—ci enclos. That I am enchanté —all the hope you give me—de vous recevoir chez moi à Boulogne!

"There is a great deal of wind here, almost all the days. Madame and Mademoiselle themselves remember of that Englishman Browne, and to him send a thousand friendships.

"Receive, my amiable Browne, the assurance of my distinguished consideration, votre tout devoué,

"DICKENS.

"A Monsieur
Monsieur H. K. BROWNE.'.

"LITTLE DORRIT"

I am bound to confess I have never read *Little Dorrit* through. I have made one or two attempts, have started at different places, and just as I seemed to be getting along very well, something has happened, either an interruption from the outside, or a condition of somnolence, similar to such as attacks audiences at lectures or sermons.

The first chapter is an excellent bit of writing. Two men, Rigaud (otherwise Blandois), a murderer, and John Baptist, a cheerful smuggler, in prison at Marseilles, make a good opening; and even with Dickens' inconsequence it is a little disappointing to lose sight of these people till the eleventh chapter, when they have had time to be released from prison and to walk from Marseilles to Chalon-sur-Saone. These two foreigners are seen afterwards in London,

where they add considerably to the confusion of the reader.

The story of Mr. Dorrit, whose acquaintance we make as a prisoner for debt, appears to be revealed, but is not; afterwards he comes into an immense fortune, and it seems evident that there was an intention of showing that a weak character may be equally injured by good fortune or by bad.

At another time it would appear that the movements of Mr. Pancks, a rent-collector, who in the course of his business unravels the mystery of Mr. Dorrit's heritage, is likely to be the real story, but Mr. Pancks hands over the money, and we never know what has happened.

Then our attention is again diverted from Mr. Dorrit and turned toward Mrs. Clennam, one of Dickens' most disagreeable old women, who appears to be possessed of a secret connected with her deceased husband, and so adds to the mystery of this mysterious book. Her son Arthur is probably the real hero, as he marries Little Dorrit at the end, and like many other heroes is a very uninteresting person. He returns from abroad, and he and his mother spar at one another through interminable dialogues, which are apparently written to teach us that words are given us to conceal our thoughts; but the secret is not revealed. Our old friend

Blandois turns up with the modest demand of a thousand pounds for keeping his mouth shut, so it must really be rather a fine secret after all.

Every now and then we come upon excellent little bits of genuine Dickens writing, then we find ourselves plunged anew into incomprehensible dialogue. Nobody seems able to speak their mind clearly except Mr. F.'s aunt. She is the only concise speaker in the book, and a genuine Dickens character.

Things are brought to a comfortable ending by the house suddenly falling down and killing everybody who is not wanted.

The illustrations share the general depression. If we had not known the four great books they might seem good, but they suffer in the first place from a want of some distinguished character to take the lead. There's no Pecksniff, nor Captain Cuttle, nor Micawber, nor even a Sir Leicester Dedlock, or the grandiose architecture of Chesney Wold. There are no thrilling adventures ; very little first-hand description ; there is nothing central that can be used for artistic purposes, but Mr. F.'s aunt is represented as a resolute and pugnacious little figure, and the only individuality that counts. The drawings have an air of being very sketchy—very little work is put in them ; and this may be partly accounted for by the absence of any tangible person or pictorial

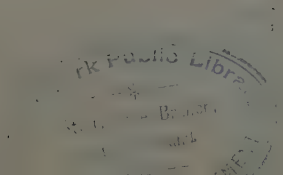
incident essential to the story. People standing about talking do not afford much scope, and the sketchy appearance is due to large white spaces being left and lines not being put close together on account of the method of printing. There is a strong tendency evidently to keep an open line, that one may not blotch its neighbour.

There are a few tinted drawings, of which three are excellent, one the interior of the prison at Marseilles, another the old house with Blandois smoking in a top window shortly before the catastrophe, entitled "Damocles." The third is "Little Dorrit's Party"—a starlight view of a mean street in the neighbourhood of the Marshalsea.

"A Tale of Two Cities"

This book has already been sufficiently described, and a few words need only be added in regard to the illustrations, which show a considerable declension in power, and even a languid attention. His mind was not aroused; probably it had become somewhat insensitive, as it was the kind of work that some years ago would have delighted him.

He had not been in France for many years, and evidently made no attempt to refresh his early impressions. At this time he was living at Banstead, near Epsom, three miles from a railway station.



He had lost his interest in illustrating. The drawings have evidently been hurriedly sketched in, and are left in a very unfinished state; and though there are some felicitous passages, they do not aid the descriptions in the book, as the illustrations had hitherto done.

He was in other directions doing very good work. The two drawings after referred to, "Death's Revel" and "Death's Banquet," designed somewhere between '61 and '63, two years or so after *A Tale of Two Cities*, show one side of his artistic nature in full force.

We have taken the Dickens books as milestones on the road of Browne's development. He is remembered as the illustrator of Charles Dickens, and nobody else counts for much.

In the eyes of his contemporaries, Dickens did not hold the pre-eminent place he does now. Although he was considered the most distinguished of the numerous authors for whom Browne worked, he was only one among the many who have since died out, and are scarcely remembered even by name. It was the fashion to have Phiz as illustrator as a sort of guarantee of excellence. It is remarkable how many books he did illustrate by etchings on steel; even pamphlets and such-like ephemeral matter as would in the present day find a place in

a magazine would have at least a frontispiece from his hand. If we take a Dickens book as a pattern, and compare it with a number of other books of the same date, we shall find in them all, plates exactly corresponding in style. The Dickens illustrations are generally the best, because he as a writer excited a greater interest and provided better material.

In Browne's early stage his plates show signs of immaturity in the draughtsmanship. Without exception, they present the appearance of spirited sketches done for the purpose of serving as memoranda for places and occurrences. There is no attempt made towards accuracy, or even probability, but they exactly hit the taste of a contemporary public who enjoyed farce, bustle, go, confusion and catastrophe, and were especially amused at that kind of horse-play which the police in our more decorous days would probably suppress. This was the demand that Phiz supplied.

Mr. James Grant, who wrote some excellent sketches of the seamy side of London life, containing a good deal of interesting and solid information about begging-letter impostors, debtors' prisons, courts of law, lunatic asylums, and so forth, thus speaks in his preface (dated 1838):

"With regard to the illustrations by 'Phiz' which embellish this volume, the author can speak more

unreservedly than he could do of the letterpress. They are among the happiest achievements of the genius of one who, yet young in years, is unquestionably in this particular style of engraving the first artist of the day."

This clearly shows that there shone through the imperfection of the execution qualities which were original and satisfying. Browne began his work in the spirit of a schoolboy who draws to amuse his friends. No matter what was described, he made a shift to express it pictorially. When he began he had very small experience of life, and evidently no knowledge of the figure, and had not practised drawing from the model. He relied almost entirely upon his imagination, which is a very good servant, but a bad master to the artist.

A distinction must be made for practical purposes, though it might not be admitted by psychologists, between imagination and memory. By memory we understand a mental act by which an artist recalls an object in such a manner as to enable him to reproduce it as exactly as possible. In this way features of particular persons, shapes of furniture and bits of architecture may be drawn more or less accurately without much difference in the method from drawing from the actual thing, except in the greater length of time that has elapsed between

EVA AND TOPSY FROM "UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

Water-colour by H. K. B. for engraving by Robert Young and publication for joint benefit.
Reduced from 11¼ in. 9¼ in

the observation and the execution. But imagination is something different. In the case of memory, the drawing is made from a recollection of a visual impression made upon the eye by some definite object, and then conveyed to the brain. But in imagination by a voluntary effort, the mind is capable of producing a sensation of things as seen, without the use of the eye. Some men are capable of calling up scenes without consciousness of any definite observation having been made by the eye. They may call up mental pictures of magnificent architecture, pageants and people and scenes in far-off countries such as they have never seen except by the "inward eye." These dreams are sometimes fragmentary, at other times so complete as to be serviceable for artistic purposes. A man so endowed does not strive to remember what he saw in a certain city or valley, or among a crowd of people in a place, but he has pictured before him a new world, not exactly reproducing any one particular object, but typifying the things unconsciously observed and now brought into service.

Certain men have the power of exciting visual sensation in the brain and making the picture seem as clear as if it were really seen by the eye. In other words they can, whilst wide-awake and by a voluntary effort, project an image in the same way as things

are seen in dreams. Others, and the great majority, require to have the visual sensation started primarily in the eye.

It is certain that Browne possessed this gift, and even abused it. He certainly saw those complicated designs of a quasi decorative character, such as the frontispieces to *Dombey* and *Chuzzlewit*, and the crowds in which he delighted as a whole, and did not build them up bit by bit. He sat down to his work without any preliminary design or tentative arrangement, made no measurements or trials, and drew straightforwardly as if he were copying something which he saw. He did this so effectually that he deprived himself of the aid that many artists find in surrounding themselves by objects, models, and studies. These only served to distract his mind. It will readily be perceived that a mental process of this kind does not tend toward realistic accuracy, but to the production of the fantastic. It may be better than the actuality, or it may be worse. Whichever it is, it is set down. Browne's architecture and furniture were generally better than the real thing, but in dealing with objects which had not impressed his mind, he often varied curiously from the reality. Anything in the shape of a boat or scientific apparatus or machinery was always grotesquely unlike the real thing. They probably did very well for the

THE FOXHUNTER'S DREAM.

From a photograph. Late period.

picture, but they offered insoluble difficulties for the professional spectator.

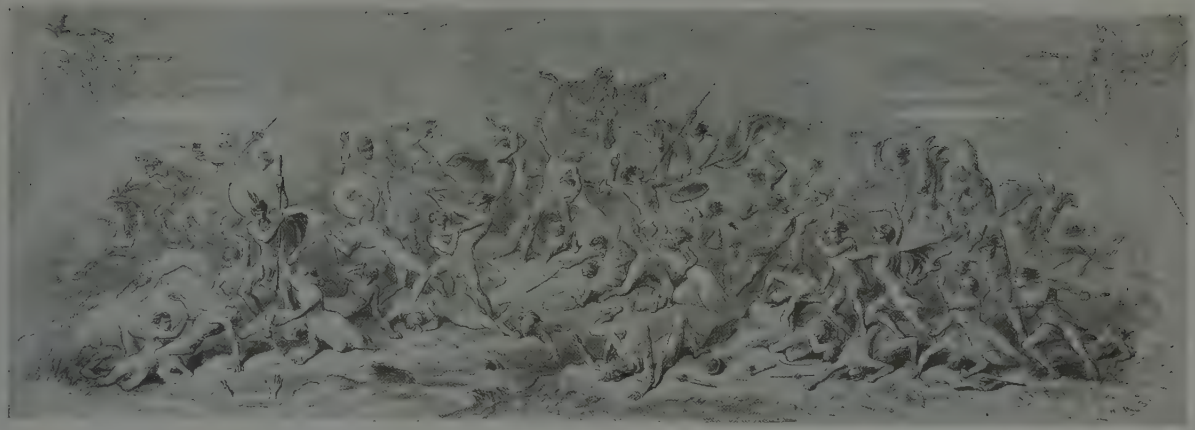
About the time he went back to live in London etching as a means of illustration was nearly dead, but he found himself greatly in demand for his sporting pictures. He contributed a number of drawings to various papers, executed in sundry new processes which irritated him exceedingly. He also composed original books of sporting, hunting, and racing bits, generally of about a dozen plates in each. One set was published by Chapman & Hall, other sets by Fores, Piccadilly. They were very original, and good lithographs, and as they were drawn by his own hand on the stone, they were as nearly orthographic as could be. Unfortunately the tinting was reproduced by chromo-lithography, then a rather primitive process, and not painted in the old-fashioned manner by hand, so that the general effect is coarse and crude.

It is interesting to note, when he was actually hunting, he scarcely drew any such scenes on his own account, but at this time executed a great number. In point of fact, when living in the country, he had unconsciously stored up an enormous amount of impressions, which he was now able to use, whereas his observations of ordinary people in social life had not been refreshed, and therefore he had

less foundation to work on, and his imagination, unfed from the outside, did not serve him with material which had hitherto been so bountifully supplied. His invention faded away for want of material, and his drawing lost its character and distinction. If he had been an artist who drew from the model, the drawing could have been refreshed, and the old standard maintained. As it was, the hand was allowed to work from the feeble promptings of a starved eye. It is interesting to observe that though the brain in one department was seriously fatigued, in another it was vigorous—for the sporting bits were full of dash and go.

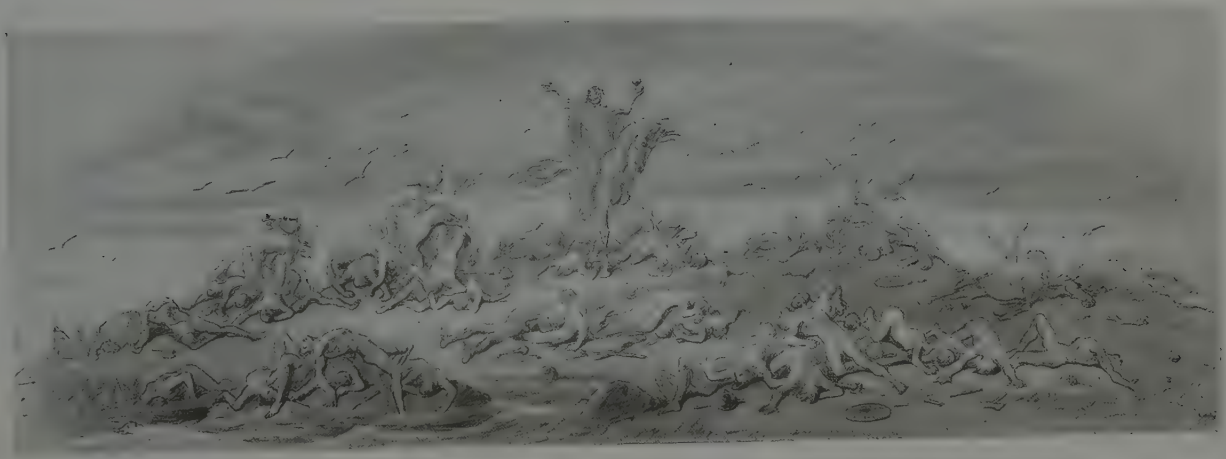
Apart from all this he continued to make designs and paint pictures, in obedience to a personal impulse which had no relation to his public work. It is very remarkable that though he passed his life in producing jocose pictures, he never composed one except for the direct purpose of sale. Out of hundreds of scraps, jottings of ideas, and important designs that he made from time to time, there was nothing of the sort. All were either subjects of a decorative character or didactic.

The two designs herewith reproduced, "Death's Banquet" and "Death's Revel," indicate an artistic detestation of the futility of war. The actual drawings were designs intended for big pictures, dedicated



DEATH'S REVEL.

Design in water-colour, grisaille, intended as one of two for big pictures. Reduced from 17 in. × 6 in.



DEATH'S BANQUET.

Companion design to preceding.

to our American cousins, and exhibited in the Royal Academy. As mere compositions they have considerable merit, and might be executed in high relief in silver, but in the opinion of the present writer they would only lose by being magnified beyond their original size.

Understanding of the foregoing is necessary for the comprehension of how the comparatively tame drawings for *A Tale of Two Cities* was succeeded by very spirited work in other directions. There was evidently no failure of the whole mind, but merely the fatigue of an overused portion of it.

CHAPTER XVII

FINAL YEARS

After he returned to London Browne saw more of his fellow-creatures, and though he could scarcely be persuaded to go into society, yet he welcomed people who came to the house. One of the most frequent visitors was Fred Barnard, a remarkable young man, who was discovered at Heatherley's, where he was ostensibly undergoing the ordinary course of art teaching, but was really devoting himself heart and soul to caricature, for which he had a genius. He could take anybody, friend or foe, keep the likeness, and then exaggerate the points so as to make it ridiculous.

He was also a rhymester, and he often supplemented his cartoons by fitting old tunes with original verses which helped to point his moral. He was an adept in dressing up, and would present himself at one time as a mediæval Italian and at another as a London costermonger or "bookie." He was an excellent amateur actor, and took part in the performances which were frequent at Heatherley's. But his most remarkable quality, which he retained throughout his

HABLOT BROWNE.

From an amateur photograph.

life, was his capacity on any social occasion of giving an entertainment all by himself. Apparently joining naturally in the conversation, he would begin to relate anecdotes, recite, give imitations from actors and people whom he had met, and all so delightfully that he held the audience as long as he pleased. Mr. Toole was the only other man whom I have met who could take upon himself the burden of entertaining a whole company.

Barnard came to Notting Hill as an admirer, and he was a never-failing source of amusement to Browne. Indeed, between the two men there existed from the first a temperamental bond of sympathy which strengthened with time and endured to the end. Barnard entered into all sorts of schemes, and egged Browne on, who always had an enormous number of irons in the fire wherewith to burn his fingers.

A favourite occupation at this time was to design big pictures, and Barnard was always eager to produce costumes, assume attitudes, or give any necessary assistance, anything, in fact, so long as he could take a part. One subject in particular for a time progressed favourably. "The Drunken Helot" was intended to be a large picture of a Spartan crowd, chiefly women and children assembled near a drinking fountain and watching an unfortunate

slave slouching along a wall, pointing out to their children the disgusting condition of the poor wretch, who had been expressly intoxicated for an object-lesson. Barnard solemnly covenanted to pose as the model, and I remember him one night demonstrating his qualifications by an extemporaneous rehearsal of great length. He lurched about against the wall, giving correct imitations of various kinds of people in the different stages of drunkenness, many excessively funny, others merely helpless and loathsome, but none of them classical.

The design was never carried out, but it was very good, and would have pointed its moral, but as it would have required, even with Browne's rough-and-ready method of oil painting, some weeks to complete, the leisure time never came, and it dropped through.

Moreover Barnard was not available, as about this time he went to Paris with one of my brothers to study painting in Bonnat's studio. The effect of this instruction on Barnard was curious. Bonnat was an uncompromising realist, as those who have seen his picture of "Job" in the Luxembourg will remember. Like many others of the French school of the period, he absolutely forbade drawing from *chic*, and insisted on a rigid adherence to the model. He left the mark of his method on his pupils.

Barnard did not stay sufficiently long to acquire a thoroughly good style of painting, but he did learn to mistrust his own conceptions and to lean on the model, and afterwards he never attempted to work without it.

If he had intended to paint subject pictures in the ordinary manner all would have been well, but he never relinquished his idea of becoming a humorous draughtsman, and occupying himself with the observation of people around him, and allowing his fancy free play. He hoped to take a front place as humorous illustrator, and produce works containing at the same time character and draughtsmanship. He actually did a great deal of work of the kind, but the result of his teaching was to hamper him. He was fond of subjects involving a good deal of action, such as a Christmas party interrupted by the appearance of a supposed ghost. He imagined people dispersing in great excitement, fat gentlemen hiding beneath chairs, underneath tables, behind sofas, curtains, in all sorts of undignified and mirth-provoking attitudes. He would conceive all these things in his mind, but he would not draw from his own imagination, and he insisted upon posing his models according to his conception, so that there was always some evaporation of the original idea, and a certain amount of stiffness due

to faithful rendering of the model. It is obvious that no model, however clever, can be posed in an attitude as vivacious as a person would naturally assume in real life, and his drawings therefore lost a great deal of the spontaneity and originality that his early works possessed.

From time to time he painted pictures from real life, such as the " Guards marching to St. James' Palace," " Clare Market by Night," but they were more interesting as subjects than paintings. Two of his most successful pictures, according to my recollection, were, a very funny one of Sir Walter Raleigh, beautifully dressed in white satin, smoking his first pipe, utterly bewildered when the early effects of the weed began to be felt; the other, serious and impressive, of Sidney Carton mounting the scaffold in the grey mist of the dawn. So far as my memory serves me, this was a picture which would stand on its own merits, besides being an excellent presentment of the subject.

He was very interesting and amusing in his domestic arrangements. During the daytime he was a great deal away from home, observing queer people, making strange acquaintances. He asked me once if I was interested in bus drivers, and told me he had driven for hours on the box seat of a certain bus in order to become acquainted with

the driver's manner of thought and speech. He was much dreaded as an employer by models, partly because he put them into attitudes difficult to maintain, and partly because he had an inveterate habit of working at night. He thought nothing of beginning at eleven or twelve, and continuing till morning. Like many artists of the time, when he began to be successful he built a house for himself, which involved him in many troubles, as houses frequently do. His troubles began early. He wrote to me in his own peculiar fashion, saying that his children had got the snuffles. This was eventually found to be diphtheria—a great trial, though fortunately he escaped bereavement. He had the house examined, and immediately under the dining-room a drain was discovered, of which the joints had not even been cemented. The wonder was that nothing worse had occurred.

He brought an action against the builder, who promptly went bankrupt. He lived there for some time, and as his income of course varied, though the expenses did not, the balance was not always on the right side. This is very common among artists. But he prepared for emergencies, and had a big board painted "House to Let," &c., which in prosperous times was kept behind the front door, but when money

was tight was conspicuously displayed to attract the public.

He was always open to take advantage of an opportunity for a little fun. One of his immediate neighbours, a distinguished painter of a good social position, was giving a special " at home " to view his pictures. Barnard, hearing of this, said he did not see why Teddy should have all the fun, and he betook himself to Nathan, who would provide a costume from that of the fallen Adam to the latest Parisian freak, and Clarkson, who had wigs of all kinds to suit every head, and on the afternoon of the party, as the first carriages drew up, Barnard had disappeared, and there was seen at his gate a gorgeous flunkey clothed in a blue coat with gold braid, canary coloured smalls, silk stockings, shoes with buckles, cocked hat and powdered hair, and furnished with a gold-headed staff. The coachmen perceiving this splendid vision naturally pulled up at Barnard's house. The gorgeous flunkey made himself very busy opening the gate, knocking at the door, and escorting dowagers, to the great astonishment of the little maid, who was not prepared for any one grander than the milkman. The more carriages there came, the more it seemed certain that Barnard's was the house of the reception, and the more stopped, and the more footmen there

THE DELUGE.

Late period. Executed in common blacklead. Reduced from 21¼ in. × 14¼ in.

were bustling about helping ladies out of carriages and putting them back. Of course the inevitable crowd made the little lane at the gate to view the costumes, and everybody was very much bewildered except the flunkey in the canary coloured smalls, who had half an hour's intense enjoyment and then disappeared.

To return to Browne.

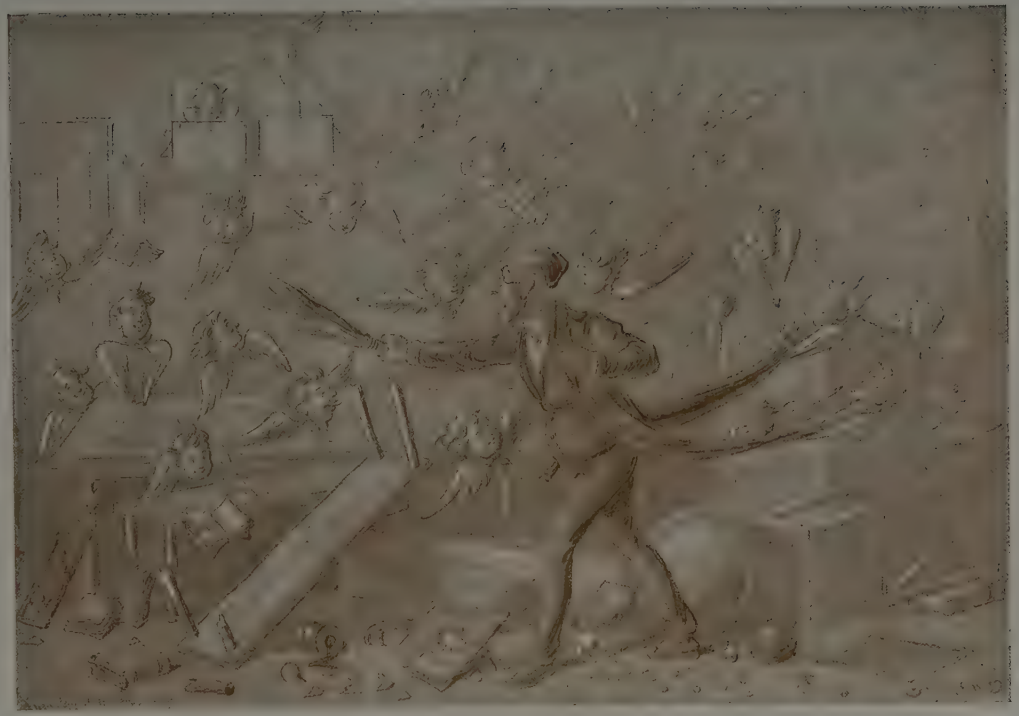
Somewhere in the late 'sixties he had a severe illness, in which he lost the use of his right thumb, and part use of his right leg. In his usual optimistic fashion he considered his feebleness as rheumatism, and though he could not close his thumb over his pencil, he continued to draw, holding his pencil between his fingers alone. He also adopted a new material, housemaid's blacklead, with which he made many designs; the solid he used for his outlines, and he rubbed the powder on with his finger as shade. The two drawings "Deluge" and "The Schoolmaster" belong to this late period.

At the beginning of his convalescence he endeavoured to fulfil a commission to furnish illustrations on wood for a cheap edition of Dickens' works, and though he produced a number for *Pickwick*, he was quite unable to continue his task, and the work passed into the hands of other artists, of whom his friend Barnard was the chief.

Browne lived for fifteen years after this illness, and, with the exception of the partial paralysis, he enjoyed very good health till within a short time of his death in 1882. During most of the time he lived at Brighton, and though he did no public work worth mentioning, he continued to draw and paint to the end.

His career as a whole undoubtedly disappointed the expectations of his friends, who without exception looked for great things, and many competent judges up to a late period believed that he only needed to exert himself to achieve something remarkable. Neither he nor they thought he had attained his ideal. So many evidences were continually given of reserve power that hope died out but slowly, and by some was cherished till his illness put an end to any reasonable expectation, and his career was definitely closed.

His early great success was in itself regarded as an indication of power—which it was—and though he had turned away from the romantic art in which he had originally shown promise, it was supposed that after a time he would resume his original purpose, and put the illustrating on one side. Some confirmation of this view was afforded by the fact already referred to, that though he was professionally engaged in works adapted for the public taste, he



THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DILEMMA.

Late period. Reduced from drawing in common blacklead, 17¼ in.×14¼ in.

was continually, in private, pushing forward towards achievements in romance and beauty. He lived artistically a double life, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Mr. Hyde being kept for the public, and Dr. Jekyll scarcely suspected by the outside world. Those who knew Dr. Jekyll were rather surprised at Mr. Hyde's long-continued vitality, and did not take him very seriously, though he undoubtedly exercised a sinister influence in continually following an occupation that appeared to be analogous to painting, but was really antagonistic, as by continually practising upon steel he lowered his power of painting.

One of the qualities most clearly to be seen in him, and which was not stifled by his periodical work, was his sense of linear composition and beauty of form, his power of transforming common objects into things of grace, and his noble disdain of the ugliness with which we live surrounded. Neither he nor his friends realised that recovery from the incessant strain of periodical work was only possible with some interval for rest and contemplation. By dint of long persistence in a wrong direction he had lost the power of choosing the right road, and having passed his time in drawing too much, he became quite unhappy if he was not still further exhausting his energies by con-

tinually having his pencil or etching needle in his hand.

Abundant evidence exists that although the illustrations were supposed by his admirers to be below the level of his power, they were highly esteemed by the public at large.

When recovering from his illness, he went to consult a physician of celebrity personally unknown to him. At the end of the consultation he offered the usual fee, but the good doctor refused it, saying, " I have for many years derived so much amusement and enjoyment from your works, that I am glad to have the opportunity of making you a small return."

Others of a later generation have appreciated the qualities of his work ; to cite one instance :—

During some years while I was President of the Liverpool Art Club I had the good fortune to be closely associated with R. A. M. Stevenson, who was at the time Professor of Art at the University College, Liverpool. He was a remarkable man, and a very able and illuminating critic, full of admiration for the modern French school, and having a lively contempt for anecdotal art. He had little to say in favour of the Italian or other old masters (though he appreciated their technique), till after a visit to Madrid he took Velasquez to his bosom, saying, " He was as good as a modern French realist." Such

a man did not seem likely to appreciate early Victorian art. But one night when we were alone something prompted me to show him the illustrations, which he had never seen. I expected something curious, but not what happened. To my surprise he was greatly interested, looked at them for a long time attentively, sometimes turning back to refresh his memory, occasionally asking a question. At last he placed his hand palm downward on one of them, and said, with the air of a man pronouncing a final judgment, " This is a lost art."

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